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Andrews University

School of Education

**A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHING TEAMS
AT LAKESIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Dion Theodore Harrigan

August 1999

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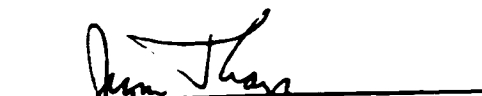
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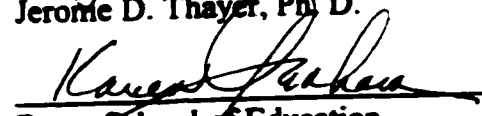
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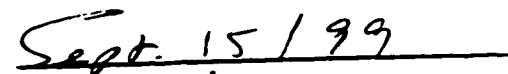

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ABSTRACT

**A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHING TEAMS
AT LAKESIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

by

Dion Theodore Harrigan

Chair: Shirley A. Freed

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

**Title: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHING TEAMS AT LAKESIDE
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Name of researcher: Dion Theodore Harrigan

Name and degree of faculty chair: Shirley A. Freed, Ph. D.

Date Completed: August 1999

Problem

Much of current educational reform calls for teacher collaboration and teaming. These practices, however, are lacking in most middle schools. How do teams develop? Is there a prescribed pattern they must follow? What contributes to team growth? What are teachers' experiences as they collaborate? The answers to these questions are needed to facilitate effective teaming in schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine and describe the experiences of five middle school teams. I focus on the perceptions of the teams in terms of their

development and relations with each other. The study describes how teachers' experiences in teaming impact attitudes, satisfaction, strengths, growing points, and stages of team development.

Method

Four core teaching teams at Lakeside Middle School were chosen because of their meaningful attempts to team. Using a case study approach, four core teams and one encore team were described using interviews, observation, a questionnaire, field notes, and artifacts. A rubric adapted from Development Dimensions International provided valuable descriptors of team processes from multiple perspectives. A cross case-analysis was used to analyze data from within and across the teams.

Results and Conclusions

The teams at Lakeside Middle school experience teaming through camaraderie, benefitting students, and exchange of ideas and skills within the team. A unique style of co-leadership among the team veterans was another way the teams experienced teaming. The principal's support and guidance, though at times lacking, was seen as being important to the teams. Recommendations include specific areas the principal could assist in team development.

Satisfaction was perceived as a vital part of the team's experience. Areas of strength include assimilating new team members, having a goal of helping students, adequate time, and ownership. Areas of growth were subject integration, and communication among teams.

Teaming is an important part of the experiences and growth of individuals and teams at Lakeside Middle school. Despite the variety of ways in which teams operate at Lakeside, there is no fixed pattern or formula. What is important, is that they have found a way that works for them, and they are using it effectively.

**To my wife and best friend Grace for her support and encouragement,
and for never doubting that I could do it.**

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MY HEAVENLY FATHER, Without you I could do nothing, and would be nothing. Thank you Lord for not failing me, and giving more than I deserve.

CHAPTER 1

A DESIRE TO COLLABORATE

As geese flap their wings, they create an uplift for the birds following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if any bird were to fly alone. > If we share a common direction and a sense of community, we can get where we are going more quickly and easily because we are traveling on the thrust of one another. —John Murphy, Pulling Together.

Introduction

During the fall of 1995, I began to work as a substitute teacher in a Midwestern state. Because I intended to be assured of a call to teach every day, I signed up with almost every school district in the county. Being in such a diverse number of school districts afforded me the opportunity to observe closely how various teachers plan lessons, work together, and organize their classes. I have worked in some of the best schools in this county as well as some of the worst, all within a few miles of each other.

As I worked in various schools, I began to notice some patterns. In many schools the teachers left little or no lesson plans for me to use. Often when I checked their plan book, there were only plans up to the previous day; the rest of the book was completely blank. In situations like these, I would often hurry across the hall to a nearby teacher of the same grade and try to get an idea of what to do. Invariably, other teachers would have

no idea what was being done in that classroom, and I was left to struggle with a room full of unruly, bored, and angry students. In the end, I had to compile my own file of lessons and activities for these occasions.

At other schools, however, there were always meaningful lesson plans left by the teacher. The plans were structured in such a way that there was continuity from previous lessons, and I really had to work hard for my pay instead of being a “babysitter”. In these schools, the plans were often so involved that I needed help with interpretation or sequence of a lesson in progress. When I sought help from a nearby teacher in that same grade level, that teacher would know exactly what was going on in that classroom, and where in the unit the absent teacher was. I was impressed, and realized that some meaningful form of communication and planning was taking place. Job satisfaction for me was so high that I was willing to get less pay and work in this collaborative environment than to make more money as a classroom “babysitter” in other districts. This positive experience with collaborative teaming made an indelible impact on my mind.

As I continued to work under very different classroom environments, I saw another pattern. The schools which had teachers who collaborated tended to have a more pleasant work atmosphere and had fewer disciplinary problems. This led me to wonder about the dynamics of teaming and its possible impact on school culture and learning. I also noticed that conversations in the faculty lounge tended to focus on problem-solving, and the teachers seemed to have a collegial relationship.

As I reflected on my prior years spent in the educational process, I came to realize that collaboration among teachers was not the norm in my experience. As teachers, we

were individualistic and acted as loners in the educational environment. The only teacher whom I have ever significantly collaborated with, in the classroom, was my wife, who taught English. Each teacher at our school was responsible for integrating a religious component into the lessons. My training in that area enabled me to team with her for the first part of her classes every day. I have often wondered why collaboration has had such a positive impact on me, and, in retrospect, I discovered that this is what I have been looking for in my previous experiences with colleagues. This is the type of experience which I thirsted for. It is my nature to want to collaborate, and this is why the prospect of research in this area appeals to me.

Statement of the Problem

Much of current educational reform calls for teacher collaboration on a meaningful level. However, the practice of teacher collaboration in teams is lacking in most middle schools. Mac Iver (1990) states, "Most schools do not use interdisciplinary teams, including about 60% of the middle schools and about 75% of schools with other grade organizations" (p. 460). Teachers tend to be loners who plan, prepare, manage, and teach on their own. They work out of sight and sound of each other, and when they close the classroom door, it is often a symbol of their desire to go it alone (Inger, 1993). This notion of the isolated autonomous teacher will be replaced, says Fullan (1992), by an "interactive professionalism."

There is evidence that collaboration has important benefits both for teachers and students (Boles, 1992; Erb & Doda, 1989; Maeroff, 1993). Little (1987) states:

Teachers who have worked together see substantial improvements in student achievement, behavior, and attitude. In schools where teachers work collaboratively,

students can sense the program coherence and a consistency of expectations, which may explain the improved behavior and achievement. For teachers, collegiality breaks the isolation of the classroom and brings career rewards and daily satisfaction. (p. 497)

Clark and Clark (1997) agree. "Team members are no longer restricted by the isolation and rigidity that characterize the typical schedule. Teachers are empowered to make decisions, work together, try out new ideas, support each other and cooperatively assess the results" (p. 2).

Unfortunately, many schools apparently do not have meaningful collaboration. Inger (1993) asserts, "In most schools, teachers are colleagues in name only. They work out of sight and sound of one another and plan and prepare their lesson materials alone, and struggle to solve their own instructional, curricular, and management problems" (p. 1).

How do teams evolve? Do they follow a similar or prescribed pattern of operation which enables them to relate well with each other? What contributes to their improvement? I have observed meaningful attempts at, and support for, teaming at Lakeside Middle School (a pseudonym). What contributes to this school's desire to continue teaming, and what kinds of dynamics are needed to support learning environments? These are questions I am curious about.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine and describe the dynamics and collaborative teaming experiences of five middle school teaching teams. I focus on the perceptions of each team in terms of their relations with each other, and describe how

their experiences impact participation, leadership, satisfaction, strengths, growing points, and stage of team development.

My study focuses on two questions to fulfill the purpose. The questions are:

1. How do individuals and teams experience teaming?
2. What features contribute to strengthening the teams?

Certain themes developed as I looked for answers to these two questions. I found that teams experience collaboration through camaraderie, helping students, exchange, experiences with the principal, and leadership roles.

Several features contributed toward strengthening teams. They include assimilating new members, focusing on students, member satisfaction, stages of development, and growing points. These themes emerged from my analysis of data.

Significance of the Study

Many studies investigate the practice and various formats of teaming (Beggs, 1964; Cramer, 1998; Erb & Doda, 1989; Fishbaugh, 1997). This study is unique in that it investigates the experiences and perceptions of teachers in their teams. This study also gives insights into the team dynamics of a school with a low staff turnover and with several teachers who worked at the school from its inception, and who feel a great degree of ownership. Another significant element of this study is that it highlights the tension and dissatisfaction which exists among the encore teachers who are unable to team because of scheduling issues. In this study, I also examine the impact of the principal on the teaming efforts of the school.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I refer to the participating groups of teachers as “Teaching Teams” and their activities together as “Teaming.”

Teaching team is defined as at least four regular teachers, along with a special education teacher, counselor, and the media specialist who regularly meet to plan for the educational welfare of students.

Teaming is the process by which members of the teaching team plan for and instruct a group of students.

Core group consists of teachers who teach core subjects such as language arts, science, social studies, and math.

Encore group is those teachers who teach subjects such as art, physical education, band, and industrial arts.

Collaboration describes the process of teachers working together. Teaming is one form of collaboration.

Block Scheduling is a readjustment in the division of time within a school day to provide longer instructional blocks of time for teachers and students.

What Is Teaming?

For the majority of people, the word team may bring to mind highly conditioned athletes in flashy uniforms who pursue a ball around a designated area, and who earn enormous sums of money through generous contracts, and even more money through lucrative endorsement deals. Sports teams, no doubt, get the most media exposure in our society, but the use of teams is in no way limited to sports.

According to Parker (1990), teaming today is popular in business and industry.

Global competition, work-force changes, the impact of technology, and other factors have pushed organizations in the United States to experiment with team approaches to achieve cost-effective, quality products and services. Teamwork is paying off with tangible results. (p. 1)

The situation, though, has not always been so. Parker continues:

In the past however, team building was pushed more by behavioral scientists than it was accepted and practiced by American business. Teamwork was 'nice' but not critical to the success of the corporation. Team building was lumped with other corporate goals that were given more lip service than real backing. (p. 1)

Definitions of Teaming

One distinguishing feature of teaming is the myriad of definitions which characterize the practice. The multiplicity of definitions often make it difficult to specifically identify what teaming is.

The term *team teaching* has been used to describe collaboration in schools (Kluwin, Gonsler, Silver, & Samuels, 1996; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Welch & Sheridan, 1995). Other educators have used the term *co-teaching* to describe collaboration in the classroom setting (Deiker & Barnett, 1996; Nowacek, 1992; Walter-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996). It is clear that teaming means different things to researchers and practitioners in various settings. Here is a sample of the variations:

Leslie Chamberlin (1969) defines team teaching as "a method of organizing teachers, children, space, and curriculum which requires several teachers, as a group, to plan, conduct, and evaluate the educational program for all the children assigned to them" (p. 16).

Still another definition (Beggs, 1964) defines team teaching as:

An arrangement whereby two or more teachers, with or without teacher aides, cooperatively plan, instruct and evaluate one or more class groups in an appropriate instructional space and given length of time, so as to take advantage of the special competencies of the team members. (p. 16)

In *Models of Collaboration*, Fishbaugh (1997) defines teaming in this way:

The teaming model of collaboration is completely interactive. Unlike the consulting model in which one person is an expert, participants in an interactive team take the lead role as situations dictate. Also, unlike the coaching model, where participants take turns owning or assisting with a problem, members of an interactive team share ownership of the purpose and outcomes of their collaborative efforts. (p. 102)

Another definition of teams used in both business and education is shown by Katzenbach and Smith (1993). "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 45). Erb and Doda (1989) share a simple definition. They define teaming as "a way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning" (p. 7).

Though teams vary in composition and size, they are generally comprised of two to five teachers who represent diverse subject areas and who share a common planning time and a common set of students. The combination of these two factors facilitate the operation of teaching teams.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) further describe "the team performance curve" to illustrate the choices people make between functioning as a working group and as a high-performance team. Working teams rely on the sum of "individual bests" for their performance. High-performance teams, by contrast, are willing to take the risks necessary for building common purposes, goals, and accountability. Members are also committed to each other's personal growth and success.

Although teams vary widely in composition and size, there are four key aspects by which teaming can be identified (Erb & Doda, 1989).

1. The first is a common planning time. Teachers on a team, in addition to teaching several classes, share a common time in which they regularly meet.

2. A second characteristic is a common set of students. The teachers of various disciplines such as English, science, and social studies teach the same set of students during the day.

3. The third characteristic of teaming is a block teaching schedule. Four teamed teachers in a pure block, for example, would share a four-period block of time when they will have all their students in their classrooms.

4. The fourth characteristic is a common space. This refers to the placing of teamed teachers in classrooms within close proximity of each other. This setting enables them to have greater control over their area.

These four elements may seem simple, but when educators incorporate them into schools, patterns within the structures are changed fundamentally.

Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) have defined cooperative teaching (sometimes called team teaching) as:

An educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e., general classrooms). In cooperative teaching both general and special education teachers are simultaneously present in the general classroom, maintaining joint responsibilities for specified education instruction that is to occur within that setting (p. 18).

Bauwens and Hourcade (1995) gave this description of the process:

A restructuring of teaching procedures in which two or more educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach

academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in integrated educational settings. (p. 46)

The above definitions have several themes in common. The themes are: shared planning, shared goals, and complementary skills. These themes shared by the definitions give a fair picture of the major components which define collaboration. There are differences in the definitions. Issues such as trust, common experiences, and periodic evaluation are not addressed by some of the definitions.

History of Teaming in Education

The history of teaming in education is examined in order to gain a perspective of how and why the practice gained prominence and some acceptance. There were three motives which launched the concept of team teaching. These motives were: a curriculum explosion, a population boom, and a shortage of teachers. These challenges led to the establishment of the Commission on Curriculum Planning and Development by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1956 (Beggs, 1964).

This commission launched a series of experimental projects in secondary schools all over the country. They received hundreds of ideas and research designs. Trump (1966), who was chosen to lead the commission, proposed a reorganization of secondary schools so that teams of teachers would share responsibility for large group presentations, follow-up sessions for groups of 12-15 students, and individualized study.

The commission submitted a proposal to the Fund for the Advancement of Education: *A Proposal Designed to Demonstrate How Improved Teacher-Utilization Can Help to Solve the Problem of Teacher Shortage in the High Schools of the United States.*

The proposal was funded, and of the various techniques proposed, the one which became the most significant of those accepted was team teaching (Beggs, 1964).

Serious investigation on teaming began in more than 100 schools across the United States, and the accounts of these experiments were published in *The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals* (1963). Additional sources for learning the theory of teaming included the film "And No Bells Ring," a filmstrip titled "Focus on Change," and a series of booklets by J.L. Trump. Both Harvard University and Claremont College aided in the progress of this new experiment in team teaching (Beggs, 1964).

The reason for all this effort is given by Delbert Lobb (1964):

The primary purpose of all these efforts has been to discover patterns of organization which would produce better educational results. Other areas of concern include changes of schedule, construction of suitable buildings and facilities, the use of various kinds of materials and equipment, the tapping of personnel resources, and reappraisal of curriculum. (p. 5)

In the decade which followed, many variations of team teaching began to surface. In England, for example, a model was proposed which consisted of two components. The first was a large group lecture; this was followed by added instruction in the traditional class setting (Warwick, 1971). Another variant of team teaching that developed included joint planning on interdisciplinary units by teachers. Though the planning was collaborative, the delivery of the lesson was done individually (Geen, 1985).

Team teaching had become a widespread practice by the early 1970s, occurring both in elementary and secondary schools, and spreading worldwide (Geen, 1985). Early in the 1980s team teaching, which was identified as a general education strategy, was applied to special education as a main streaming tool. In special education it was called

co-teaching. Teaming was heralded as an innovative approach which required open communication and careful negotiation among educators (Brandenberger & Womack, 1982; Garvar & Papanla, 1982).

The great potential of team teaching was, however, steeped in controversy about service delivery. Special educators had begun stressing the need for partnerships between teachers of general education and special education. The growing need for ways to provide for students with disabilities in traditional classrooms prompted the introduction of various terms (Friend & Cook, 1993). The years of debate about these definitions and terms served as a diversion from the investigation and implementation of alternate teaching approaches. Even today, there exists many variants for team teaching. Despite the debate about the definitions of teaming, there seems to be wide agreement that the act of collaboration, in general, and teaming, in particular possesses great benefits.

Benefits of Teaming

The recent resurgence of collaboration and cooperative learning has caused many educators to view team teaching as a potent school improvement tool. Fishbaugh (1997) introduces the “Teaming Model” of collaboration. She asserts that it can be an effective means of empowering teachers to accept responsibility for student success and school effectiveness. There are four components to the process:

1. Team focus. Members of the team should state a team goal, vision, and purpose.
2. Role Sharing. Team roles such as facilitator, recorder, leader, and observer should be shared by all, and no one team member should always play the same role.

3. Individual Accountability. Each team member has to share responsibility for achieving team goals.

4. Team Processing. Individually and together, team members can review and analyze the team process.

These steps can be effective in team building, and school improvement. The teaming model of collaboration has an impact on teachers.

Boyer (1995) agrees that collaboration increases teacher effectiveness. He states:

Teachers we discovered, actually prefer to work in groups. For example, when we asked elementary teachers, nationwide. . . . they expressed strongest preference for 'groups of teachers working together'. One fifth-grade teacher said: 'After years of working in isolation, I recently became part of a four-teacher team. As a result, I find my enjoyment has greatly increased, my teaching has become more effective, and students are learning more. (p. 35)

Teacher collaboration has other benefits as well. Collegiality breaks the isolation of the classroom (Court, 1999; Little, 1992), brings rewards of daily satisfaction (Blomquist, 1986; Shann, 1998), and avoids end-of-year burnout (Little, 1987; Lombardi, 1995; Meade, 1996). Over time, teachers who work collaboratively find themselves better equipped for classroom work (Deason, 1992; Richardson, 1993).

Collegiality has a positive impact in school settings (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1997; Little, 1982; Lokon, 1997). These studies concluded that teachers in successful schools valued, benefitted from, and participated in collegiality.

In schools where there is strong collegiality, teachers were more likely to engage in professional growth (Conelli, 1999; Corriero, 1996; Saurino, 1998; Shields, 1997). Zahoric (1987) found that when teachers work alone valuable resources are wasted and

this results in job dissatisfaction. A summary of research on cooperation and collegiality by Evans (1991) concluded that “as a workstyle, cooperation results in higher personal achievement, higher self-esteem, and more positive relationships at work” (p. 13). The practice of sharing among teachers contributed to their development as professionals.

There are additional advantages to collaboration over conventional education approaches. They include sharing, planning, and goal setting (Romeo, 1997; Waldner, 1995). These practices help teachers to gain a sense of ownership of the process of instruction and to establish mutually satisfying goals. This results in each teacher feeling responsible for ensuring a positive outcome (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990). The act of collaboration encourages teachers to share goals and objectives, and to sublimate individual interests for the greater good (Lashley, Matcynski, & Williams, 1992).

Another advantage is that collaboration allows participants to learn from each other and to establish solid relationships (Lieberman, 1992; Quinn & Nan, 1996). Teachers benefit from exposure to others’ diverse educational philosophies, training, and experience. This stimulation of ideas, along with training and experience, increases communication among professionals at all levels (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990).

The literature clearly indicates that collaboration has specific benefits for teams. Among the benefits are school improvement, teacher effectiveness, teacher satisfaction, decreased isolation, professional growth, increased ownership, and increased communication. These reasons make it necessary to look at some of the problems encountered in seeking to collaborate.

Challenges to Teaming

Despite the many benefits which teaming brings to schools, it is not seen as a cure-all, nor is it perceived as a goal that is easily achievable. Differences of viewpoint, personality traits, teaching styles, and insufficient time all present a challenge to teaming. In reality, teaming has significant challenges to overcome.

Hargreaves (1980) shares with some irony that teaching, like sex, was performed best in privacy. Hargreaves felt that teaming and teaching often did not make a good fit because of role conflict and loss of autonomy. These two challenges often outweighed any potential advantages of teaming, and attest to the difficulty of fostering positive ideas about collaboration.

Inger (1993) identifies three major barriers to generic collaboration. The first barrier he calls norms of privacy. Teachers by nature are entrepreneurial individuals who value their autonomy. The structure of the school day almost assures that they will see their colleagues at odd moments such as before school and during lunch. Teaching is grounded in an atmosphere of privacy and non-interference. Inger (1993) further asserts that veteran teachers value autonomy so much that they will not offer advice to beginning teachers or other experienced teachers except when asked.

Teachers by nature tend to value privacy in the classroom. If they are asked to team without adequate structures and relationships in place, they will be unable to derive any benefits from collaboration (Hargreaves, 1980).

The second barrier which Inger (1993) identifies is what he calls Subject Affiliation and Departmental Organization. Most schools on the secondary level are strictly organized by subject matter, and teachers tend to see themselves as specialists in

these areas. This position gives teachers a strong sense of identity and a frame of reference. When teachers work within this organizational structure, the insularity of the system limits their capacity to open up to other colleagues in other subject areas.

The existence of teams in the workplace today creates quite a challenge for success. Thomas (1992) believes that good teamwork is notoriously difficult to achieve. Team teaching, which began in the late 1960s with high hopes for success, has largely failed. This failure of teaming has been attributed to lack of organizational support, lack of time for planning, and the desire to avoid conflict over differences in approach (Cohen, 1976; Hargreaves, 1980). It is apparent that teaming is a more difficult enterprise than many anticipated.

The third barrier to teacher collaboration is the one which exists between academic and vocational teachers. In most high schools, vocational and academic education are worlds apart. There is often a mentality of us versus them (Inger, 1993). Inger points out that, in many ways, academic and vocational teachers are separated physically, socially, organizationally, and educationally. Also, these two groups are not considered members of the same professional community (Inger, 1993).

There are three aspects of this rift between academic and vocational teachers. The first is the status difference. Teachers of academic disciplines generally have higher status, get more respect, and are more successful in getting resources. On the other hand, vocational teachers often become victims of the system. Little (1992) explains it this way: "Teachers who cultivated a craft because it held genuine appeal for them, now find themselves not as skilled craftspeople but as caretakers of marginal students" (p. 29).

Still another barrier between academic and vocational teachers is physical

separation. The isolation of most vocational teachers is compounded by physical separation and programmatic fragmentation. Teachers in these two worlds have little reason to want to collaborate, and the physical distance between both facilities engenders isolation (Inger, 1993).

The idea of collaboration, though it may seem practical and desirable to many educators, has some real obstacles to overcome. These barriers can be physical, social, educational, or emotional.

Description of Teaming Formats

There are various formats which characterize the practice of teaming. The following descriptions of these formats give some idea of the wide variety of practices in operation.

Merenbloom (1996) describes the practice of team teaching in an interesting way. He states that if a contemporary Rip Van Winkle were to awaken today, he would find a much different situation than he knew as a child should he visit a restructured school. Rip might find two mathematics teachers in a seventh grade classroom working to address the learning needs of 50 students.

In another classroom, Rip might find three teachers working together with up to 80 students in an interdisciplinary team. For part of the day, these teachers are generalists who teach reading or language arts together; later, one may specialize in science, another in math, and yet another in social studies.

Another model of team teaching is the integrated approach popularized by Heidi-Hayes Jacobs (1989). Jacobs feels that an integrated approach more closely mirrors the

real world. Students are taught to deal with subjects as they appear in the real world, as history is not something you do in the morning, and English you do in the afternoon. The fragmented day does not reflect reality.

According to Davis (1995), when faculty collaborate on interdisciplinary teams the outcome should result in a product that would be “greater than the sum of the parts.” Davis (1995) believes that there are times when collaboration is not necessary and could be an impediment to success. Many tasks, he asserts, could be done more effectively alone. He continues:

Some of these tasks are making preparation for class sessions, finding materials and texts, developing outside study resources, and generating exam questions. Most faculty teams will be far more productive if they make clear distinctions between the work they need to do together, and the work they could do alone. Some member on the team needs to be on the alert, constantly ready to ask: Could we do this better alone? Working together is time-consuming, expensive, and sometimes, stressful. Why not spend ‘high quality’ time together working on those things that most require collaboration? (p. 6)

In spite of the multiple ways in which teams operate, there are basically three types of teams found in middle and high schools (Beggs, 1964; Merenbloom, 1996). The first is an *interdisciplinary team*. This team consists of several teachers who specialize in individual subject areas and who are responsible for several groups of students for a part of the school day. During planning time, these teachers make decisions that affect the entire program.

Disciplinary or single subject teams involve grouping and regrouping the students for instruction in a specific course. Two teachers in any subject area can instruct their classes at a parallel time slot and manage the necessary regrouping for learning.

Combination teams can be seen as a mini-interdisciplinary team. Two teachers

from different subject areas may combine the curricular experience. Using a block-time approach, the team integrates curriculum and responds to student needs.

Beggs (1964) also observed variations found in team teaching. He too found three general patterns emerging from observations across the United States. These patterns were named the single-discipline team, the interdisciplinary team, and the school within-school team. These three correspond with those found by Merenbloom (1996).

There appears to be three basic variations found in teams. They are similar because teachers collaborate in planning and instruction for the same group of students in the three. These approaches are different because teachers do not necessarily have to teach the same subjects, and the instruction of students may not be in the same room.

Teachers from Lakeside Middle School use the combination or mini-interdisciplinary team pattern. The block schedule operation of the school in which teachers have a 90-minute instructional period enables them to plan and teach together.

Within the various patterns used in teaming, there are specific formats of operation. These formats are descriptions of what you would likely see when you enter a classroom where team teaching is taking place.

Friend and Cook (1993) describe six different team-teaching formats in use:

1. One person is teaching while the other observes the teaching and the students.
2. One teacher is the primary instructor and the other is the “drifter” who assists students throughout the lesson.
3. Both instructors teach on a parallel basis, that is, two simultaneous lessons.
4. Station-teaching teachers exchange groups of students and repeat instruction for each group at different times.

5. For alternative teaching, one teacher provides remedial instruction to a group while the other provides enrichment activities for another group.

6. Both teachers deliver instruction at the same time.

The variations of teaming described above are used by different teams depending on need or team dynamics. I have observed several of these formats in use at Lakeside Middle School. Descriptions and identification are given in later chapters.

The complex nature of human interaction and personalities will ensure some type of conflict in the teaming process. The best intentions in teaming can only be realized if the team works together effectively. Without effective teaming, synergy (where the total effect is greater than just the sum of individual effort) will not be realized. The development process and interactions among team members are unique.

Stages of Team Development

Virtually all group development theories agree that “groups have a substance and life of their own and, given certain conditions, they develop in somewhat predictable ways” (Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996, p. 56).

The complexity of group interaction was noted nearly 50 years ago by Lewin (1951). Since then, many other researchers have reiterated his findings (Dunegan & Duchon, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Mullen & Goethals, 1987; Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990; Swezy & Salas, 1992). These researchers studied the complexities and variables which affect and influence group behaviors. Because of these studies, many organizations and companies, including schools, rely on work teams to improve operations and productivity.

The literature in general describes two views of team development. The first of the views is based on studies of group therapy, human relations, and group communication patterns. This research has produced several models of the changes and interactions that occur in groups (Bales & Strodtbeck, 1951; Heinen & Jacobsen, 1976; Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). These studies reflect what is called the “traditional model.” They suggest that teams are quite consistent in the phases of interaction and development.

The second view of team development was developed around studies of the life-span development of groups in organizations (McCorkle, 1992; McGrath, 1991). This research is typified by Gersick’s (1988) study of eight teams from different organizations. Gersick indicated that the teams she studied did not develop according to the traditional paradigm. She reports that “the developmental process is a punctuated equilibrium” (p. 32). She reported that at the mid-point of a team’s life cycle, teams experience a reevaluation and revision process. They then refocus their efforts toward task completion. These findings contrast with traditional views by asserting that team development is not necessarily linear, and the phases are not clearly demarcated. Beck and Yeager (1996) also assert that Tuckman’s traditional model of team development distorts the reality of teamwork. In essence, they suggest that although teams do pass through stages, they do not necessarily pass through these stages in sequence. In fact, they believe that some teams do not pass through some stages at all.

By comprehensively observing and studying many organizations and groups, Tuckman developed an evolutionary model of team development. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) describe five developmental stages which teams pass through. These stages are

said to be predictable, linear, and cyclical. Tuckman analyzed the data of 50 studies in his original review (1965) and 22 studies in his updated version (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Later, a fifth stage was added to the model which focused on termination. The stages are identified as: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. These stages provide a useful model for the understanding of the development and evolution of teams. A synopsis of the five stages follows:

1. **Forming**. Forming occurs when a group of individuals comes together and begins to see themselves as a team. This is an initial stage of optimism as members begin to bond, and some apprehension occurs as they set the ground rules for team operation. The tensions that exist begin to break down, however, as members begin to share information about themselves and their expectations of the team. In this stage, according to Tuckman and Jensen (1977), the group is generally on its best behavior.

2. **Storming**. This is the stage of group conflict. It is inevitable that most teams will storm as the realities of the process set in and morale goes down. There is a struggle to bring resolution to problems as the team tries to establish a decision-making procedure. This stage, says Tuckman (1965), can breed conflict and resentment. Some groups, however, do not go through this stage, but storming can be beneficial. The conflict and energy produced by storming can help the team learn how to deal with differences and resolve difficulties. Teams that do not pass through the storming phase tend to be less productive and more divided (Tuckman, 1965).

3. **Norming**. This third stage can be characterized as one of negotiation (Forsyth, 1990). It is a time when teams learn to resolve differences and focus on the tasks at hand. There is an effort to try to get along with the foibles and personalities of the group

members and to build trust. New members of the group really now begin to feel a sense of belonging. There exists the danger, however, that the desire to avoid conflict can bring a reluctance to share controversial ideas. This inhibition can cause a reluctance to challenge the prevailing thinking.

4. Performing. The characterization of this stage is that of cohesive teamwork. A group of individuals has now learned to function as a unit, and energies are pooled to produce meaningful and positive results. The team performs synergistically to accomplish its objectives. There is an appreciation and respect for each other, as team members have learned how to resolve differences and solve problems.

5. Adjourning. This final stage of the team-building process is for teams that are not permanent. Here, the team is disbanded or de-formed after it has performed its duty. Members from the team return to their original places from which they came.

Despite arguments and varying ideas from researchers and behavioral theorists (Gersick, 1988; McCorkle, 1992; McGrath, 1991; Peck, 1987), Tuckman's position, though sequential, serves as a general model (Morgan, Salas, & Glickman, 1993).

This study, in part, used the conceptual and theoretical framework established by Tuckman and Jensen (1977). I have chosen to use Tuckman's theory for several reasons. The first is that it has a strong research history. It is the model quoted by many researchers who study team development (Cramer, 1998; Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996; Parker, 1990; Robbins, 1992; Stewart, Manz, & Sims, 1999). Also, several of the other models of team development have structures which parallel Tuckman's model (see Appendix B, Table 8).

The various models which I have seen described in the literature tend to follow

the same general pattern of development. The patterns are: a period of coming together, one of difficulty, then resolution, and finally proficiency. The major differences I observed are with the terms used to describe the stages and the sequence of events. Tuckman appears to posit the most accepted and universal description of the developmental stages of teams.

For the purposes of this study, I have limited my focus to only the first four stages of Tuckman's theory, since the teams are still in operation and have no plans to adjourn. At the conclusion, I determine from the data which stage of development each team appears to be in. Which stage the teams are in is decided from several sources. I first compare the descriptions of the stages given by Tuckman with the reports given by team members and outsiders. I also use descriptions given with the team development rubric, and descriptors used by Development Dimensions International in team-building workshops (see Appendix B, Tables 9, 10, & 11). Finally, I use my own observations of the team and their interactions to determine which stage the teams are at.

Summary

The literature reviewed falls into four major categories. The first is the variety of ways in which the concept of teaming is defined and described. Many of the definitions and descriptions of what is called team teaching are very broad. Chamberlin (1969) uses the term 'umbrella' to describe the large number of variations in teaming and also notes that no specific pattern has complete acceptance. In this study, I have defined teaming as the process by which members of the teaching team plan for and instruct a group of students.

Another major category in the synthesis of the literature is the benefits which teaching teams bring. Research suggests that there are many positive benefits to be gained by this type of collaboration (Boyer, 1995; Evans, 1991; Fishbaugh, 1997; Little, 1982; Zahoric, 1987). Collegiality, satisfaction, higher self-esteem, responsibility, positive relationships, ownership, exposure to other ideas, professional growth, and commitment are benefits that result from teaming.

Despite the virtues of teaming, there are admittedly many challenges. Some of the literature focuses on the difficulty of teaming in terms of time, personalities, and the willingness of school administrators to allow teachers the needed time to plan (Cohen, 1976; Hargreaves, 1980; Inger, 1993; Thomas, 1992). These researchers see collaboration as an impediment to success in the school when improperly used. Educators need to distinguish between work that can be done alone, and work that can best be accomplished through collaboration.

The fourth category has to do with the variety of teaching formats in use. The descriptions run the spectrum from teachers who just generally share teaching ideas, to teachers who plan, take turns teaching the same group of students, and evaluate the results of their efforts on a regular basis (Fishbaugh, 1997; Friend & Cook, 1993; Merenbloom, 1996).

Finally, the literature on teaming deals with the stages of team development. There are two main views described in the literature. The first view focuses on studies of group therapy and human relations, and the second view was developed around studies of groups in organizations. This study, which favors the second view, uses the theory of

team development described by Tuckman and Jensen (1977) to describe the development of teams at Lakeside Middle School.

In conclusion, although the descriptions, definitions, and practice of teaming vary widely, there is little doubt as to the tremendous potential teaching teams have to positively affect the students and school culture (Mac Iver, 1990). The synergy from collaboration has far-reaching effects not only in the attitudes and beliefs of teachers, but in the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position. > If we take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership as with the geese, we become dependent on each other.
--John Murphy, *Pulling Together*.

Research Design

This study is perceptual in its approach. I depend on the perceptions of the team members, outsiders, and myself to determine how these teams experience collaboration. Perception is also used to identify features which contribute to strengthening teams.

I have selected a case study design as my approach in conducting this study. This approach has allowed me to closely investigate ongoing processes by collecting pertinent data. My decision to use a case study method is based on the limited descriptions in the literature about what happens in teaching teams in one building and their dynamics. I have conducted a single-site case study which focused on one phenomenon--team collaboration and dynamics.

Case Study Research

Robert Yin (1994) defines a case as:

An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation

in which there will be many more variables of interests than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 1994, p. 13)

A case study is used therefore when the researcher wants to observe the conditions of a phenomenon which would be very relevant to the study. By its very nature, the case study has an emergent design in which each incremental research decision depends on prior information (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Therefore, this study is necessarily descriptive and interpretive in order to address the processes and dynamics of team collaboration.

Research Questions

Research questions are important because they help to guide and give focus to a study. Questions for research were formulated from an examination of the literature, and insights that resulted from my pilot study. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do individuals and teams experience teaming?
2. What features contribute to strengthening the teams?

Research Setting

I worked at Lakeside Middle School as a substitute teacher for 2 years prior to this study. During this time, I noticed the collegial relationships among the teachers and admired the sharing of information and communication on the various grade levels. For years I have yearned for collaborative relationships in the educational setting, and the

discovery of teaming at Lakeside provided an excellent opportunity for me to study the phenomenon.

Lakeside Middle School is a handsome, one-story brick structure in a Midwestern state. The \$2.8 million structure was erected in the late 1970s. The school is located on a 34-acre site that was once farmland in a small town, and is part of a small school district. The mission statement at the school is: "To be an accepting and nurturing environment which guides young adolescents' growth to independence and responsibility which promotes the development of their self-esteem, basic skills, general knowledge, creativity, pride in quality of thinking and work, and interpersonal relations."

At the time of the study, 282 students were enrolled at the school, and the staff consisted of one principal, five aides, 21 teachers, one counselor, two secretaries, one media specialist, three cafeteria workers, one part-time speech therapist, and three maintenance workers.

Students take core academic classes of language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, they are provided instruction in art, physical education, industrial arts, health, foreign language, and band. All students at Lakeside are part of an advisory program in which they have a home base within the school community. One unique aspect of the school is that it has a Grade 5, even though it is a middle school. The school district is unique in one other way that is worthy of note: It has traditionally been financially healthy. This healthy financial situation is due to the presence of a nuclear power plant in the area. This power company generates money for the school district through significant property taxes. Because of this peculiar situation and the nature of my study, it is not my intention to generalize this study to other schools.

Access to the Setting

Gaining access to the setting for the purpose of research was not a difficult task. I had worked in the school district as a substitute teacher for 2 years prior to the study, and had formed a collegial relationship with the principal and faculty of the school. Teachers and students had a high level of confidence in me, and were willing to talk openly. The teachers felt that their classes were well cared for and their lesson instructions were followed in their absence when I worked in their classroom. I first approached the new principal in the spring of 1997 about the possibility of conducting a pilot study at the school. Permission was granted, and I asked for his recommendations as to which teachers to interview.

At the conclusion of the pilot study I then determined that this site had the potential for research. I requested permission to conduct the study at the school, and was given time on the school board's agenda to present my request. The principal and I collaborated on what was the best approach to take in order to gain board approval, and his suggestions were very helpful.

I met with the school board at their monthly meeting and presented a synopsis of my research proposal; I also answered those questions which arose. It was a very cordial meeting, and the attendees expressed interest in my study. A letter of approval was written by the superintendent and sent to me on October 14, 1997. After securing approval for the study, copies of consent forms were given to the principal for distribution to the faculty (see Appendix A, p. 192). Along with a cover letter and consent forms, a copy of the results of the pilot study was shared with the school administration. Before data collection began, I met with the teachers at a scheduled staff meeting to outline the

purpose of my study and to answer any questions they had regarding my study, and their role in the process.

My collegial relationship with the informants prior to and during the study increased the level of trustworthiness for the responses which I received. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) share this perspective:

Researchers in peripheral membership roles feel that an insider's perspective is vital to forming an accurate appraisal of group life, so they observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting core group membership. (p. 380)

My credibility at Lakeside and my experience working in teaching teams are strengths of this study. Since the researcher is a primary instrument in a qualitative study (Eisner, 1991), my experiences clearly influenced the study. My experiences including what I saw, heard, and wrote about were a result of the relationships I established in the school.

Selection of Informants

Selection was done by using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is done to increase the utility of information. It requires that information be obtained about the variations in the phenomenon studied before the sample is chosen. The researcher searches for key informants who are information-rich (Patton, 1990). Merriam (1988) states:

Since it is impossible to interview everyone, and observe everything, and gather all the relevant materials in a case, a sample needs to be selected. Purposive sampling is a well-known and widely used sampling strategy in qualitative research. (p. 52)

My original intention at the onset of data collection was to focus on two teams. I initially intended to focus my study on the fifth- and seventh-grade teams. The fifth-

grade team was selected because two of the teachers were new, and the dynamics of assimilation of these newcomers into a well-established team had the potential to yield fruitful data. I selected the seventh-grade team because the composition of teachers distinguished it as the earliest established team in the school. This team could possibly provide valuable data on the beginnings and history of teaching teams at the school.

As I began my interviews and observations at the site, however, I sensed that something was missing. Out of curiosity I sat in on an eighth-grade team meeting one day and was amazed at the collegiality and dynamics of the group. I decided immediately that if I were to focus on only two teams, my study would miss extremely rich sources of data. I also realized the benefit of focusing on teaming as a part of the entire school's culture. I subsequently received approval from the principal to study all of the teams. I realized that all of the teams probably possessed varied characteristics, and though I was unsure of what they all were, I was confident that the data would yield interesting information.

The experience of expanding my focus to all teams in the school reinforced the idea of the emergent nature of qualitative research. Each incremental research decision is dependent on prior information (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). My data collection was to expand even further when I decided to interview the school media specialist and school counselor. This decision led my study to focus on an unrealized issue.

In our post-interview conversation, the counselor casually asked if I had interviewed any of the encore teachers. That had not occurred to me since my focus was on core teams. He suggested that I should get their perspective on the matter of collaboration and teaming. I conducted interviews with them and was able to get fresh

perspectives on teaming at the school. The school has one teaching team in each grade (5-8), and each team is made up of about four regular teachers and one Special Education teacher. A media specialist also assists the teams in planning and instruction.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study was conducted for approximately 6 months at the Lakeside Middle School. I visited the building approximately three times per week to observe, collect artifacts, and conduct interviews. Data were collected from all of the core teams at the school, and from the encore teachers. (See interview schedule in Appendix A, p. 196)

Sources of Evidence

Data for this study were collected using a multi-method approach which consisted of: (1) interviews, (2) classroom observations, (3) observing team meetings, (4) collection of artifacts, (5) field notes, and (6) a questionnaire.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews formed the primary data collection method of this study. I conducted a total of 23 semi-structured interviews from the single site (see Appendix A, p. 194). Each teacher was interviewed once, then follow up discussions were held for additional information. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. After transcription, the interviews were returned to each informant for clarification of additional information.

Classroom Observations

Observations of teachers at work in the classroom were another source of

evidence. I visited each team member's classroom three times during the data collection period. Visits were made to observe how teachers team during lessons, and how they execute the lessons which were planned together. During these visits, notes were kept of the activities in the classroom. These notes were used to add to the data, and also provided corroboration of other data.

Team Observations

Evidence was also collected by observation of regular team meetings. Observations lasted from January to June of 1998. During the observation period, I visited each team five times. Notes were kept at these meetings, and were used to gain clearer insights into the dynamics of the teams, and to corroborate evidence from other sources.

Documentation

Documents were used to provide background information on the teams and their individual members. These consisted of demographic data, faculty meeting minutes, reports, information on years of service, and educational attainment. This documentary evidence was used to gain insights into the background and experience of the informants, and to corroborate the evidence gathered from other sources.

Field Notes

One source of data for this research came from my observations and interactions with the teams and individuals. Very often, casual conversations in the hall or an invitation to an activity outside of the school provided perspectives on individual

experiences. During these times taking field notes served as an important part of my data collection.

Questionnaire

I adapted a survey on team rating which provided feedback from each team in May 1998. The questionnaire is used frequently by Development Dimensions International for training and improving teams in business and schools (see Appendix B, Table 10). The team development rubric described six areas on a scale of 1 to 5. The data were analyzed and used to corroborate the evidence gathered from other sources. The rubric described team development in six areas:

1. Purpose: Having clearly stated team goals and objectives.
2. Process: Using well-defined procedures for making decisions and solving problems.
3. Communication: Expressing oneself openly, honestly, and clearly with others.
4. Involvement: Using individual talents and skills to help the team succeed.
5. Commitment: Willingness to accept responsibilities and to perform them in a timely manner.
6. Trust: Confidently relying on others to fulfill their responsibilities on the team.

These practices describe team performance and I used them to describe team satisfaction. Participants were asked to circle numbers on a continuum which most closely describes their perceptions of their teams. Scoring was done by adding the numbers circled for a total score. The highest possible score was 30.

If the score was 24-30, the team is probably strong. If the score was 15-23, the

team is on track, but needs to develop in a few areas. If the score was 6-14, the team can benefit from development in several areas.

Data from each team member were collected. The counselor and media specialist were asked to use the same rubric to describe each team. Their descriptions were used to corroborate my findings.

Analysis of Data

Data analysis of the interviews and observations was done primarily by hand, and partially with NUDIST, a qualitative analysis software program. This software assisted in categorizing key words from the data. Coding of the data was done by using a code list prior to data analysis. The codes used were: early experiences in teaming, satisfaction, challenges, the principal's role, strengths, weaknesses, definition of teaming, and impact of collaboration on the curriculum. This method of beginning a "start list" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) emerged from codes based on my reading in the area and my pilot study. Additional codes emerged from the data. These were: autonomy, respect, unity, sharing, student benefit, teaching styles, "baggage," and diverse philosophies.

Themes were selected and categorized for analysis. The selection of themes was done by searching for key words and meanings in the transcribed interviews and field notes, and placing them into categories. The categories that emerged were: personal relationships, professional relationships, and purpose for teaming.

Similar patterns were found in the four teams, as I conducted a cross-case analysis of them. During the analysis process, my research questions served as a guide.

Trustworthiness

The importance of trustworthiness has to do with the establishment of credibility for the concepts studied. In order to establish trustworthiness, Yin (1994) describes these strategies:

1. Collect multiple sources of data in a way that encourages convergent lines of enquiry.
2. Create a chain of evidence by developing a detailed protocol, keeping accurate records of the data collected, and citing evidence in the data collection.
3. Consult with key informants concerning the accuracy of the information in the draft document.

Yin (1994) points out:

The most important advantage presented by multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of enquiry. Any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information. (p. 92)

The use of multiple sources of evidence also allows the researcher to address a broader range of issues. Also, the best advantage seems to be the development of the process of corroboration during collection and analysis. In this study, I used interviews, observations, artifacts, field notes, and a questionnaire.

Creating a chain of evidence is vital for the strength of this study. A chain of evidence enhances the trustworthiness of the study by clearly showing how I organized, utilized, and analyzed the data to arrive at conclusions.

One way I organized the data was by arranging the transcriptions in a systematic way. The four volumes represent the four core teams (Grades 5-8), and volume 5

represents the encore team. Each person on a team was assigned a pseudonym which begins with the first four or five letters of the alphabet. These letters appear near the volume number so that the reader can easily tell which teacher from what grade made a particular comment. This is one example of how data were organized.

The informants in this study were consulted on responses given after the transcription of interviews. They were given the opportunity to clarify perspectives and give additional information. A few of the respondents made changes in chronological information, but most of the respondents felt content with the data they initially shared.

During the analysis of the data for this study, I encountered several instances in which one source of data appeared to conflict with others. In one notable instance, two teachers on the Grade 6 team described the team as being strong, and two others as being on track, but needing development in a few areas (see Appendix B, Table 11). These classifications appear to conflict with the descriptions given by the media specialist and school counselor who described the team as not being strong. They also conflict with descriptions given by teachers on the team during interviews, and with my observations which also conclude that this team is not strong.

Whenever I encountered disconfirming data in this study, I always compare sources for corroboration. If the data are corroborated by other sources, then they are accepted as representing that particular perspective. If the data do not have sufficient support from other sources, they are not accepted.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted during the spring of 1997 in order to investigate the

possibility of using this particular school as a research site, and to “unearth” any potential difficulties before the actual research process. Yin (1994) states that “the pilot case study helps investigators to refine their data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed” (p. 74). The pilot study was also conducted to give me more experience in the interview process.

This site was selected for the pilot study because of my close association with the teachers and students as a regular substitute teacher for the past 2 years. Also, it is one of the schools in the county where I have observed serious attempts at facilitating teaching teams. The practice of teaching teams began in the school during the 1980s.

I first had an interview with the principal to get his perspective on teaming in his school, and to investigate the possibility of using that school as a future research site. The data received were recorded manually. Among the questions asked were: “What are your plans for the new school year in terms of teaming among teachers?” and “What role do you play in the process of collaboration in this school?”

I discovered that the principal was pleased with the collaborative atmosphere at the school but would like to see more in the area of interdisciplinary curriculum planning. I left the meeting feeling confident that I had his support for the pilot study, and for future study should I choose that school as a research site.

I received verbal permission from the principal to conduct interviews with any two teachers in the school. The principal recommended two teachers. His recommendations were based on his belief that these teachers represent a cross section of individuals on teams in the school. One teacher from each collaborative team in Grades 6

and 7 was selected. Data were collected from these interviews using observations and a tape recorder.

The first interview was with a female seventh-grade math teacher, and the other interview was with a male sixth-grade science and social studies teacher. Both interviews lasted for approximately half an hour each. The male teacher granted me the interview with the stipulation that we both collaborate. (I had to teach one session of his social studies class about life in the Caribbean region.)

Interview Process

I interviewed the selected female teacher of one team in the faculty lounge. The room was neat and comfortable, and we sat at a round table. She has been on staff for more than 15 years. After a brief introduction about the purpose and nature of the interview, she began to relate a story about the collaborative experiences in her teaching career.

This teacher went on to relate how her colleague across the hall greatly assisted her in coping with her difficult class. As a first year teacher, she had a stressful experience in a class with problem students. She obviously also had an important story to tell of her experience with collaboration. I found that many of my interview questions were answered in her stories, and I got richer data from her relating these experiences. This experience taught me the value of adaptability and flexibility in the interview process.

My interview with the selected male teacher of another team took place in his classroom. The classroom was cluttered with all types of experiments, charts, and

creatures in aquariums and terrariums. The room felt to me as a place where hands-on activities abounded. This teacher has taught at this school for 18 years. His team has been in operation for the past 10 years. This teacher shared a story about the death of a female teaching team member from brain cancer.

The discovery of this team member's illness with the growing tumor in her brain explained her previous inability to contribute more to the team. It is interesting to note that this interviewee's concept of the present teaching team is colored by the experience of the death of a previous team member. I sensed a bit of guilt on the part of this team member for expecting a greater contribution from the ill teacher when a physical illness prevented optimum performance.

This experience perhaps made it difficult for the surviving team members to assimilate the replacement. It seems also that the memory of the experience still elicits some discomfort on the part of the interviewee. I made a mental note to probe this team further on the death of their colleague when I conduct my study.

Analysis of Interviews

Analysis of the pilot interviews was done by first listening to the interview tapes repeatedly. Notes were then taken of important ideas related by the interviewee, and ideas that came to my mind as I listened and recollected words and expressions.

I then looked for emerging themes and patterns in the conversations. I took note of words, phrases, metaphors, and special vocabulary. All of these elements gave me an awareness of the conception of teaming held by the teachers interviewed. A comparison

was also done of the perspectives held by both teachers and the principal on the level teaming in the school.

Conclusion of Pilot Study

Based on the results of my pilot study, I concluded that this site had the potential to yield fruitful data for a qualitative research study on teaching teams. The study of the teams should provide useful data, and give a more comprehensive picture of the processes and dynamics of teaming among teachers in the school. It is also apparent that the interviewees have rich stories to share about their collaborative experiences in the past and how those experiences possibly shape their attitudes presently.

The interview respondents had many positive experiences with their teams.

Among them were:

1. The team is united in its approach to discipline.
2. The teachers are able to balance student work load due to their awareness of each other's requirements.
3. There are several pairs of eyes, and combined teacher knowledge.
4. Teachers are able to share planning.
5. The students benefit from different teaching styles.
6. The team not the individual teacher, meets with parents to resolve problems.
7. Teacher aides, the special education teacher, and the media specialist are a part of the team.
8. Teaming gives school a sense of wholeness.

Both teachers who were interviewed felt that teaming at the school was a definite benefit; however, there were challenges. Among them were:

1. Difficulty in building a good team exists
2. Team-to-team collaboration was lacking.
3. Diverse educational philosophies exists.
4. Different teaching styles exist.
5. Attempts to go “too far too fast” exist
6. Team members do not give their complete efforts.
7. One has to deal with “baggage” from previous attempts.

Both respondents were asked to assign a letter grade to their team in terms of performance and collegiality. The grades ranged from B minus to B plus. The principal's role was seen as critical in maintaining team coherence. He assisted by giving support, keeping team meetings on task, giving valuable information of what is happening in other teams, and resolving conflicts.

Summary

In summary, a case study research design was used to study the dynamics of teaching teams at Lakeside Middle School. The methods used were best suited to my research questions because they described how the members of the teams experienced collaboration, and how the teams developed into effective groups.

Corroboration was used to show consistency in the results of the study, and a cross case analysis demonstrated inter-case consistency (Merriam, 1988, p. 172). A pilot study investigated the site's possibility for research, and helped sharpen interview skills.

CHAPTER 3

LAKESIDE LOWER-GRADE TEAMS

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. – Henry Ford

Description of the School

Lakeside Middle School is located in a small rural community in the Midwest. The road approaching the school consists of modest homes with manicured lawns. The streets are well maintained. The school building is located in a former agricultural area. There are stately old red barns scattered on plots adjacent to the school, evidence of an agrarian past. Freight trains occasionally rumble by to the north within sight of the school. The one-story handsome brick building sits on a 34-acre site. The structure sits diagonally from the main road, and has an extensive lawn with ample parking. The 78,000 square foot building was occupied on September 5, 1978 (1997-1998 Annual Report).

Traditionally, the district to which Lakeside belongs was known as one of the richest in the region. Lakeside had the fortune of having a nuclear power plant sitting on its doorstep generating ample tax revenue. In 1992, however, the state altered its structure for funding schools in an attempt to be more equitable. Lakeside lost a lot of money. Despite the changes, Lakeside remains financially healthy.

The main entrance to the building has a flag pole adjacent to the walkway. The Stars and Stripes can be heard fluttering in the wind as you approach the swinging glass doors. Glass window panels on both sides of the doors bear messages of the school as a drug-free environment, and display a logo of the school district. As you step into the building, corridors extend to the left, right, and straight ahead. Floors are covered in a well-maintained tan carpeting with dark brown flecks scattered in the pile. From the vantage of the main entrance, clocks can be seen on all the walls at the end of the corridors. The walls of the school are painted a creamy bone white, with a narrow band of orange two feet below the drop ceiling. Student lockers painted blue line the walls of the halls. The color scheme of the interior, blue and orange, reflects the school colors.

Directly ahead on the wall is the school-district mission statement:

The Lakeside public school district is committed to cultivating lifelong learners who will enhance the quality of life in our world community. Believing everyone has potential to grow in learning and to contribute positively to the society, we promote educational opportunities for learners of all ages to strive toward excellence.

Adjacent to the mission statement is a poster of student expectations. The poster has a large orange and blue honey bee walking upright on hind legs postured as a boxer.

Below this caricature are five expectations:

1. "Bee in attendance daily."
2. "Bee courteous."
3. "Bee a good listener."
4. "Bee able to follow instructions."
5. "Bee able to do your best."

The school motto is "Expect the best."

Lakeside Middle School operates on a block scheduling format. This is often described as an extended schedule. Block scheduling is a readjustment of the way time is divided during the school day. Rather than the traditional 42-minute class period all year, blocks at Lakeside are 90 minutes long and last for two semesters. This arrangement provides longer instructional blocks of time for teachers and students. The block schedule for Lakeside Middle School can be seen in Appendix A on page 197.

Based on the middle school concept, the school is divided into pods or areas for specific grades. The pods for Grades 5 and 6 are distinctly separate from Grades 7 and 8. Students are strictly forbidden to enter areas outside their pods unless they are going to an assigned task in another area of the school. This controls the interaction of older and younger students.

From the school entrance you can turn left and walk past the Grade 7 pod to the end of the hall. There you turn right and pass the Grade 6 pod, and at the far side of the hall is the Grade 5 pod. The halls are usually clear except when students are changing classes or on an errand to the office.

My focus on the elements which describe the teams in this part of the study does not follow a rigid format. The categories and labels vary from one team to the next, and in many cases, the order of the sections is influenced by the focus of the interviews.

Trust is a very important part of research. To protect the privacy of the informants involved, and to maintain anonymity, pseudonyms are used to describe all teachers.

Grade 5 Team

I guess I would call it a two-headed leader. With the two veterans, they think alike and sometimes complete each other's sentences. They are both on the same wavelength a lot, and I'm glad to have that. You know, I feel comfortable going to either one of them. --Brent

The Grade 5 team is distinctive among the others in the building because of its method of planning and the number of new persons on board. Here is an overview. The cluster of classrooms comprising the Grade 5 team, is on the north of the building nearest the playground. Mobiles of student projects hang from the ceiling. Doors and walls are decorated with lesson themes. Despite the fact that this grade is an elementary school level, it has taken on the characteristics of a middle school.

Team Overview

The composition of the grade 5 team was stable for the duration of this study. Only two team members, Claire and Dori, have been on the team for a long period of time. Brent has been on the team since the beginning of the school year. The newest member, Emily, is a long-term substitute who is taking the place of a teacher on maternity leave.

This team is unique in one interesting way: It is an elementary grade operating in a middle school. When the district built a new high school, their elementary school building was already too full to accommodate the fifth grade, so it was placed in the middle-school. This team began in 1978 when there was talk of actually operating the school on the middle-school concept instead of operating like a junior high school. The middle school concept is more multi-disciplinary in its approach, while the junior high concept is more individualistic. Teaming was seen as important to this grade since the

children had to pick up their books and move to different teachers and classes as the older students in high school. Having the kids in smaller groups was seen as a benefit.

Another perspective on the distinctiveness of the team is the way in which it helps the students adjust to middle school. The situation at Lakeside Middle School with a Grade 5 class in the building has historically caused anxiety for parents. The parents of these small children have been reluctant to send their “babies” into a school with rowdy and boisterous adolescents. This is a stigma, some teachers contend, that middle schools tend to carry. Claire, a Grade 5 veteran, affirms that the desire to help these students to cope with middle school is one reason for the introduction of teams:

After 2 weeks of school, I can stand out in that hallway, and a child from another room, whose name I have no idea of, will come up to me with a problem and know that I will help them take care of it. So the students in the groups know that there are four teachers that they can go to for help. If their teacher is busy, if their teacher is absent that day, down the hall, whatever, and they have a problem, their locker won't open, they know they can go to any of us and get help. It's not like you just go to your own teacher, so it gives the kids a real feeling of pods (they call them pods), but a real feeling of togetherness. (Vol. 1c, p. 25)

One benefit of teaming for the students of Grade 5 is that it eases the transition from elementary to middle school. The close-knit community assists kids in coping with a different way of operation in school. The willingness of the teachers to consider this difficult transition for the children demonstrates a desire to facilitate their students.

This section's purpose is to give the reader a general idea of the team members and their background.

Annie

As special education teacher on the team, Annie is young and enthusiastic. Her focus is reading, spelling, and English. Her undergraduate degree is in specialized

elementary teaching. She has been teaching for about 4 years. Most of her teaching was half-time in the high school and half-time in the middle school in this district. This is her first year on the team, and she is now here full-time.

Dori

One of the team veterans, Dori has been with the team for 6 years. Her undergraduate degree is in English and Elementary Education, and her Master's degree is in reading instruction. Over the years she taught a variety of subjects from elementary through college. She plans social studies lessons for the team. She has taught for 21 years. Dori seems rather quiet.

Claire

A team veteran, Claire has been with the team from its beginning in 1978. During those years she has taught Grades 4 to 7. Her undergraduate degree is in environmental science, math, and elementary education. Her Masters' degree is in the Teaching of Reading. Claire also has 45 hours beyond the Master's degree. She is responsible for planning the science lessons on the team, and has been teaching for 23 years, all in this district. Claire is talkative and businesslike.

Brent

As a first-year member of the team, Brent is the only male. He plans the math lessons. His undergraduate degree is in elementary education. Brent has been with the district for 4 years, and during this time has taught second, fourth, and fifth grades. He has been teaching for 10 years. Brent is in his 30s, and is very quiet and reserved.

Emily

A long-term substitute teacher, Emily has been on the team for just a month. Her undergraduate degree is in Elementary Education. This is her first positive team experience, and she has taught for 2 years. As a young teacher in her 20s, Emily likes to ask questions.

Team Processes

Team processes is a description of the activities and interactions which take place on a team. The processes include team meetings, their teaming format, how teaming is defined, and how this team deals with new members.

Team Meetings

Meetings for the Grade 5 team are held twice per week. The teachers get together on Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30, their common planning time. The Tuesday meetings are more informal and the team meets only briefly to deal with administrative issues. The topics on the agenda typically deal with activities being planned for the whole school, disciplinary problems, and financial issues affecting the grade level. It is during the Thursday meeting when they meet for at least 1 hour that the bulk of the planning and sharing gets done. The typical Thursday meeting is held in Dori's room. The room has two prominent quotes on the wall: "Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement"; "Attitude is the mind's paintbrush, it can color any situation." These quotes apparently reflect the teacher's attitude toward the educational process, and perhaps give some insight into her philosophy of education. The teachers drift in a few

minutes after the scheduled time to begin, chatting informally as they assemble. They then sit informally on the students' desks in a rough circle at the front of the room. The desks and chairs are integrated into one unit, they therefore just pull them in the direction needed to face each other. There is no appointed leader for this team; however, Claire usually gives a verbal signal that they are ready to begin and it is time to get serious.

This meeting is critical since it will determine the lessons which will be taught in Grade 5 during the following week. Within the last 12 years, the Grade 5 team has adopted a way to team which is unique in the school. Each teacher is responsible for planning the lessons for a designated subject, and for explaining and sharing copies of those lessons to all other teachers on the team. The determination of what subject each is responsible for is made primarily by the individual's preference for that subject, or area of specific training.

During the first part of the meeting, for the first 15 minutes or so, the school media specialist visits the team to finalize plans for the students of the grade to attend her program and activities held in the library. The media specialist plays an integral role in the educational process. The school counselor also meets with the team at this time. He shares concerns about individual students, and recommends ways to deal with specific problems. The aide also is present during meetings to give input and share ideas.

In a very business-like fashion, each team member explains the lessons for the subject they have planned for, while their colleagues take notes and ask questions as needed. Sometimes they share a snack of leftover pretzels and cereal from a science lesson held earlier that day. As I sat in meetings, I saw how well the teachers got along, and the camaraderie which had developed even with the new teachers.

Claire and Dori keep interjecting when other teachers share lesson plans. They state that they remember doing those lessons previously, and shared particular approaches with the team. At first I could not understand these interruptions, but I soon concluded that their experience over the years has acquainted them well with the curriculum.

During team meetings, I did not keep detailed notes of the interactions of team members. The observations at this time were useful in giving me a feel for what happens during the sessions, and how the teachers interact with each other.

Interviews were conducted with each member of the team in order to obtain more information about their relational dynamics. The sixth grade team has the most newcomers of any team in the school. I wondered if this fact had an impact on how the team collaborated.

Teaming Format

Grade 5 teams in a unique way. Each teacher is responsible for planning the lessons for an individual subject. The match between subject and teacher is determined by the teacher's ability, and preference for that subject. After the lessons are planned, the teachers meet to explain the details of each lesson to all team members. The others have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification, and to give input to the lessons. This method of teaming is described as interdisciplinary team teaching. In this format, teachers who specialize in individual subject areas meet together to plan. This planning affects the entire program.

Definitions of Teaming

In order to gain a greater understanding of how each team member perceives the

concept of teaming, I asked for a definition. These are the responses from team members:

Emily: "Working as a group. Helping each other out. Filling in the blanks which others have" (Vol. 1e, p. 49).

Claire: "Working together. The learning you would never get if you were isolated in your classroom" (Vol. 1c, p. 23).

Annie: "Working closely with the other teacher. Having more integration. Connecting the language arts to the social studies, to the science , to the reading. Connecting them all in some group or theme" (Vol. 1a, p. 2).

Dori: "Respecting other people's opinion. Respect the fact that they are going to do their best. If you have respect, it is easier to give up your own personal preferences. Keep in mind you are doing it for students. What is best for students is the number one thing" (Vol. 1d, p. 34).

Brent: "Working together, planning together, making sure we are all on the same page. Doing what works for the kids and not necessarily what works for us. Teamwork—working together to accomplish one end goal" (Vol. 1b, p. 11).

The dominant theme for the definitions in this group is the concept of working together. The goal of teaming for some, ultimately, is the education and welfare of the students. Some of these definitions reveal a focus on students as a reason for teaming.

Newcomers to the Team

One of the questions of this study deals with the integration of newcomers to the teams. I was curious about how new members felt as they came into a team that was established, and what was done to aid their assimilation into the group.

Emily is the newest member of the team. She had been with them for just one month at the time I interviewed her. As a long-term substitute teacher, she is happy to be aboard, but wonders if her position will be permanent. The teaming experience she had before coming to Lakeside was less than positive. As she describes it:

I did a long-term subbing position just before this. It was a fifth/sixth grade team, and there were two fifth grade, two sixth grade, and then a special ed. And it was all in a big open classroom. So it didn't work very well. . . . They all had their special agendas that they wanted to finish, and being in an open classroom, when they planned, sometimes they would plan at home, then we would come in and plan as a group. And they didn't take into consideration that the other grade might be testing at that time, or the other grade might have a special activity at that time. Like the sixth grade would plan a movie when the fifth grade was taking a test, so the video would carry over to the fifth grade. They're craning their necks to see the video and not taking the test. The special education teacher obviously had her own needs that she had to do by state mandate, that she had to get done, and that didn't always work with. Sometimes, the fifth and sixth grade would get together and do a project and she had to keep her 20 kids over there in the corner, and that just caused a problem. I think mostly the problem was the open room. (Vol. 1e, p. 41)

The problem in her former team was compounded by a veteran teacher who Emily said tried to make them adapt to her version of "how a team works." This approach caused resentment and a clash of personalities.

This negative experience caused Emily to vow never to work in another group. She decided that when she got her next classroom she would shut the door and that would be it. If the other teachers on her grade level did not agree with her on educational issues, that would be too bad.

Because of previous experiences, Emily was quite apprehensive when she was told in her interview that she would be working with a team in her new position. Her misgivings soon disappeared, however, when she met the Grade 5 team and sat in on her first meeting. She describes her experience:

Then I came in here. Before I ever took the job, I came in for 3 days to observe, and I sat in on a planning meeting, and it worked so well. This person did math, this person did science, this person did social studies, and then they all worked it out around their separate schedules, and they said, well, if you can't get it done on this date, that's fine, get it done sometime. And I was amazed. I was just like, "Wow! It can work." And so then when I took the job, I was excited to see the other part of teaming to see that it would work. And so far, I feel it works. I haven't had any problems. (Vol. 1e, p. 44)

It appears that Emily's previous experiences had a negative impact on her perception of teaming, but her positive experiences with the Grade 5 team have altered her attitude.

One area which I was interested in getting information on in this team was that of assimilation. I wanted to find out what was the experience of these new members as they joined a new "family." Emily's experience seems to have been positive.

I haven't had any problems. They're always willing to help me, coming in as a sub. You know, if I have any questions, they are always willing to help, they sit down and explain the lesson plan or explain the individual lesson even. In science for example, there's no science book, per se. Claire does all the planning, and she's got all the materials together from several books, and if I don't understand things, she's more than happy to stop whatever she's doing, sit down and work it out. It is the same way with social studies. With math, I can pretty much figure that out on my own. I think it works pretty well. (Vol. 1e, p. 44)

Brent was another new-comer on the team, and its only male. He has worked on a team before at another school and has had many positive experiences. The way teaming was done at his previous school was different and seemed to be more of the structure which he prefers. Brent shares his previous experience:

The way we worked that team was, we didn't necessarily plan things together like we do here, but we split the subject matter up according to the areas of strength. I was teaching the math, science, and social studies and I was doing my own reading. The other teachers were doing the language, religion, which was taught there, and she did her own social studies as well, so we just kinda split the subject areas up. It was just me and another teacher and we were right next to each other with our rooms. Anytime there was any collaborating, we were able to step right outside our door and

let them make changes and adjustments throughout the day. And we would switch the students back and forth. For the math students--I would do all the math, two classes in a row. My class would switch to hers and she would give me her students for math. There were some adjustments that needed to be made in time and they were verbal--touch base with each other. A very well working team. We would do a lot of things together. Projects together. Mine were science projects with both groups; she did all the religious projects with the groups. It worked out real well. (Vol. 1b, p. 10)

The impact of the teaming experience for Brent at his previous school went beyond a working relationship. Brent relates: "I still keep in touch with this particular teacher, who is retired. The relationship that we had worked more than as a team, we were really good friends. It worked out really well that way" (Vol. 1b, p. 10).

Despite his positive experiences with teaming in the past, he has one complaint with this team: He feels that the operation of this Grade 5 team is too structured for him.

It's been difficult. It's probably more structured than I'm used to. There's kinda not a lot of leeway for making adjustments on a day-to-day basis. When I team taught at Lake Water School, if you got behind one day, I was the one teaching that subject matter, I could make it up, or catch it up the next day. Here it's on a pretty tight schedule, we plan every day and if you're going to make adjustments to get caught up, it doesn't allow you a lot of flexibility that way, and that sometimes is difficult for me because I like a little more time to pound things in, so to speak, so it becomes a little more clear. (Vol. 1b, p. 12)

Brent feels some discomfort with the structure of the Grade 5 team. He feels that the extra time he may need to assimilate the subject matter is not available. There is also a feeling of being transient for Brent; he has been shifted around a lot in the district, and he senses that he may not be in his present position for long. Interestingly, one member of this team voiced the same concern. The issues of ownership and permanence loom large from Brent's perspective.

However, being low on the totem pole, I don't even know if this is where I'll be next year. You know, I could be back in the elementary or somewhere else. Obviously, when I said I was in second, fourth, fifth, I've been shifted around--this is my third year with this particular group of kids, so I'm just kind of shifting around a lot. So

that's one hard thing for me is just getting adapted somewhere because I haven't been anywhere longer than 2 years. You know, I was in second grade 2 years, fourth grade 1, fifth grade 1. I need to get to a grade level, wherever it may be, and then start to establish. (Vol. 1b, p. 13)

It would seem obvious that this kind of uncertainty would definitely have an impact on Brent's sense of belonging to the team. He also feels uncomfortable using resources provided by another teacher that he has little time to modify to his style of teaching.

Somehow Brent seems uneasy as a new member of this team, and this feeling may be beyond the fact that he has adjustments to make as he adapts to this new environment and way of operation. There seems to be personality and gender issues with which he has had to deal with for years as a male elementary school teacher in a predominantly female domain. When asked about weaknesses in his team, his first of two points has to do with himself.

Well, I think, probably me for improving would to be more interactive with the other three. I sometimes make myself isolated--kinda working on a whole bunch of things--I find very little time for the social part that, and this is wherever I teach, it's probably, with my degree in elementary minor--dealing more with women all the time, you know, I don't want to stereotype, but, you know, it's sometimes nice to have a guy in the building or someone you can just relate to. Within the teaching team, there are obviously other men in the building I can relate to whereas in the elementary there were none. It seems my innocent concept; it helps make your day go better. I think probably, that would be the weakest thing for me personally. (Vol. 1b, p. 14)

The fact that he is the only male on an all female team seems to pose some difficulty for Brent. Coming from elementary school, where traditionally there are relatively fewer male teachers than female, Brent wants more male companionship. The other issue seems to be that of personality. Reserved and laid back would be apt descriptions for Brent; he has used these terms to describe himself. Other team members

seem quite energetic and outgoing, and this may account for the isolation Brent feels.

Isolation may also be self-imposed, he admits that he makes himself isolated, engaging in work, and leaving little time for social matters.

Having worked in the building for a number of years, and having a sense of how the teams operate, I sensed early that somehow Brent did not fit in with this group. I too would not be surprised if he is changed again. (When I visited the school at the beginning of the new school year, Brent had left the school district for another teaching position. It seems that he really did not fit in. One person intimated that he mentioned the position at Lakeside as being too stressful.)

There is a desire on the part of the veterans to assimilate and assist the new team members and make them more comfortable. This effort is made even though it takes more time. Dori, who has been on the team for 7 years explains:

Well, what we're doing this year, that I noticed that the last couple years we didn't do, in the last couple years you get to know each other and you talk really fast and you can probably plan in 30 minutes because we all know each other so well. This year planning takes longer, and we try to go more in-depth about what we mean about, you know, we might say, 'Do a non-fiction prediction activity with this lesson.' Well, in the last 2 or 3 years, we all knew what that meant; the new team members may not know what that means, and so we try to be much more explicit in our planning. The other that I do, and I don't know if this is right, but our language, our writing program, some teachers may have a background in that, some don't, so I'll just say, 'If you need any help with this, just holler.' And if they holler, then we set up a time where I can go through what we do as a writing process. Whenever we're doing something, you know, maybe I'll come up with an idea, I'll just say, 'Hey, I'm doing this. You want to do it, great, I'll give you the materials, if don't want to, that's fine.' So anytime we do something that might be different, we try to throw it out there and share it with them, they have an option of to do it or not, but we try to be real open as far as . . . and if they have an idea, you know, we try to, say, 'Hey that's great, we'll do that too.' And support any ideas that they might come with. (Vol. 1d, p. 36)

Newcomers to the Grade 5 team appear to feel accepted by the other team members, and appreciate the patience and time taken to bring them up to speed. The

veterans are willing to spend the extra time it requires to help the new team members to understand how they operate. This willingness to integrate new members appears to strengthen this team by allowing the veterans to be exposed to different and fresh ideas.

Team Strengths and Weaknesses

Another important component which I wondered about was the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the group. There is wide agreement that the experience of the veteran teachers is a major factor in making the team strong. The second factor is the peculiar way in which the team plans lessons and operates.

Emily believes that because each person gets to plan exclusively in the subject area which he or she likes or has the most competence, it generates enthusiasm and interest. This translates into better knowledge and information, which really helps the kids.

Claire, the veteran on the team, feels that the team strength is based on the fact that she and Dori have been teaming and working for so long.

We've been doing it a long time. I've been doing it for 12 years or so. Dori's been in the same team with me for 7 or 8 years, probably not that long, probably for 6 or 7 years she's been in it, so we've worked together a long time, which means many things we say we don't have to go into detail about. We tend to talk, well, we aren't doing it as much now because of the new people, but once it get rolling you don't talk in full sentences. Then somebody new comes in and they don't understand what you're talking about, and it's almost like a marriage--you know what the other person's going to say because you've spent so much time together. And so, this year it's different, but I think that maturity of the team is still there, even though there's new people in it. I don't think we've lost that feeling that we've always been a team and there's a team here and that's the way it works. (Vol. 1c, p. 24)

I have noted interestingly that the team tends to revolve around Claire and Dori. Everyone seems to agree that their experience is what makes the team strong. What do

the other family members have to contribute? Are not new ideas and fresh perspectives an important part of this family? Claire goes as far as describing the working relationship of the veterans as “almost like a marriage.” This phrase reflects a degree of professional “intimacy” and communication which is exclusive only to them. Where does this leave the other team members as far as roles are concerned? Perhaps they feel like people who probably do not have much to contribute, but much to gain in this family. This is Brent’s perspective on the influence of the veteran teachers:

Strengths would be having two veteran teachers to help two non-veteran teachers, so to speak, in the building. And having their leadership and experiences from past--from doing this particular program a number of years. You know, that’s probably at this point the strongest strength. (Vol. 1b, p. 14)

Annie surely agrees with this perspective. These two teachers seem more like mentors than colleagues from the way she describes them.

Everybody trusts her, [Claire] and you know she’s up on all the latest things that we have to keep the kids up on. She knows all the objectives that they have to reach this year. She shows us she knows what she’s talking about and that everything that she’s asking the kids to do is something they need to know. It’s not fluff, it’s not stuff they just use to fill their time. I mean, it is different now that we have, I mean, Claire and Dori are the veteran teachers and Emily and Brent are really new. They’re just taking everything that Dori and Claire are giving and we’re trusting Claire and Dori. . . . I would have to say, the experience of Claire and Dori. . . . Not only being teachers for so long, but working together for such a long time, they’ve got everything refined down. The fluff is out--we’re working on going towards those objectives. . . . I think Claire and Dori are like the goals that I am trying to work up to. . . . And even me, being the 2 years here, they have probably taught me more about actually teaching and different teaching styles than I ever learned in school. (Vol. 1a, p. 5)

These are certainly very strong words and feelings expressed almost in awe for these veteran team members. For Annie being on the team seems to be a great learning experience. I wonder, though, how much she is able to contribute to the team when she always seems to be in the learning mode.

It was interesting to me to hear perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the teams. Claire, the veteran, feels that the changes in staffing over the last few years have contributed to an instability on the team. She also stated that by the time team stability occurs, she will be ready for retirement.

Emily sees communication as an area in which the team could be improved. The communication style of the two veteran teachers often isolates the newcomers. New team members do not understand the incomplete sentences and plans refined by years of use. Here is Emily's perspective when I asked about improvements the team could make in its operation.

Talking in complete sentences when they're doing the planning. Because, like I said, Dori and Claire have been doing it for so long that they basically know what they are going to cover during each week, because they have been doing the same thing with little variations, and when they get talking and they're like, 'Well, we did it this way last year, OK that worked real good, let's try it again this year.' And Brent, and I are kind of going, 'Well, can you refresh our memory, 'cause we weren't here last year!' They do try, they try very hard for that, but I can understand where it can be hard, it's just like any relationship. My husband and I talk in incomplete sentences and you would never be able to understand, it's just any long term-relationship would have that problem, and a new person coming in would feel a little bit left out, but Brent and I both are very assertive people and we come right out and say, 'Hey, we didn't get that, please explain it.' And they do. (Vol. 1e, p. 46)

It is quite clear that this team sees their unique planning style as being one strength. The experience of the veteran teachers along with the practice of allowing each person to plan in an area that they feel comfortable has been an asset to the team. The weakness of the team is seen to be the number of new members on board. Because they cannot contribute immediately to the traditionally structured approach, the team needs time for these newcomers to pull their weight.

The availability of time is an asset to this team since it gives the veterans the extra

time needed to help the new teachers. This process also contributes to strengthening this team.

Team Challenges

All groups have challenges in their operation, and the Grade 5 team is no exception. Claire, the team veteran, sees the new team members as a challenge. She says:

Recently, it's been the change of teachers. And I've taught with many different groups since I've started. The original man and I team taught, and then there was another teacher who took pregnancy leave, and we got another one in. And then the three of us taught together for probably about 7 or 8 years. Then someone else came in new and replaced one, and then a couple years later someone else came in and replaced one. And then this year, because of our numbers, we actually have four classrooms instead of three, plus another one who left, so of the four of us, there are two new teachers. And it's really nice once you get to know each other, the planning and that is a lot smoother; you can go through things quickly. We've done it before, and then this year, we're having to explain every single thing in much more detail so it takes a lot longer. And then just getting to know new people. You know, when you've worked with someone for a while, you know how much details you have to give them, you know their background knowledge in the subject, whether I can just say, we're going to be talking about atoms today, or whether I have to go into detail about what to talk about. (Vol. 1c, p. 21)

Annie shares the same perspective of having the new team members as being the challenge of collaboration on the team.

Well, this year it has been a real challenge with the two new people. Claire and Dori have been great about filling them in on what we're doing and the hardest part is probably making sure that those other two people are keeping up. And I think that one of those teachers has had a harder time with keeping up with everything that we do. And I think that's been the hardest part; I mean, that's been where my concerns have been the most. All the other classrooms are doing things a certain way and their getting all this work done by a certain time and this other classroom—I'm not sure what's getting done. And, you know, my concern is for the kids. Are they getting what their supposed to be getting. And that would probably be the most difficult part here....Yeah, yeah. And one has pretty much gotten up to speed, and the other one is lagging behind a little bit. But we have hope. We're trying. (Vol. 1a, p. 3)

Dori has a slightly different concern when it comes to challenges. Her issue is the sacrifice of your preferences for that of others.

Oh, sometimes you can schedule just the same as someone else's and someone might want to start doing this at a certain time and maybe you would prefer to. I guess the time schedule, and you have to be able to bend sometimes and do it the way someone else would want to for the good of the group. You know, there are certain things that we do our own way, in the classrooms you can carry out certain things in your own way, but if you really want to be successful, you really do have to try to do things the same way that somebody else wants to because if you're switching students, which we do for reading, and even if we're not switching, kids talk to other kids in other classrooms. And if they know all of the fifth graders are doing the checkbook system. That checkbook system would not work as well if there was one fifth grade group not doing that. And so, I like the checkbook system but if there was something that was happening in two other classrooms, and you weren't doing it, your kids would feel bad. So there might be some things once in a while that maybe you would prefer not to, but if the other two rooms really want to do it, then you will go along with it, just because it is much better for the whole if we're all trying to follow through on the same kind of program, the same kind of expectation, the same fun things, the same not fun things, you know. So for the good of the whole, you have to sometimes give in. (Vol. 1d, p. 34)

For this team, the major issue seems to be the assimilation of the two new members. Based on previous statements and analysis, there was significant effort put into making the newcomers comfortable and bringing them on board the team. However, their presence has disrupted the smooth operation, and has led to a greater expenditure of time and energy. This has been the team's greatest challenge.

Dori has expressed a philosophy which I think is very important for the team. She sees collaboration as a commitment to the whole, for the good of the group. The education and welfare of all the kids in Grade 5 is more important than what happens in one classroom.

Team Leadership

The issue of team leadership plays a vital role in the way in which the team

operates and plans. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) stress the importance of the role of team leaders: "Team leaders act to clarify purposes and goals, build commitment and self-confidence, strengthen the team's collective skills and approach, remove externally imposed obstacles, and create opportunities for others" (p. 131). Therefore, it is clear that if a team does not have strong and purposeful leadership, it will accomplish little.

Leadership in the fifth-grade team is not formally defined. There is no named leader; however, there is leadership on the team. Emily, one of the newcomers, sees Claire as assuming the leadership role.

Claire would. As far as I'm concerned, she's usually the one that calls the meeting to order, because we sometimes like to sit in there and just chat about the students or what happened on the news, or, you know, and we'd sit in there and waste half of our planning time just talking, and she usually comes in and says like, "OK, we've got to do this." And then we do it and then we talk. And she usually starts out by saying, "This is what the science plans are for this week." And that gets us in the mood to plan.

Dion: So she normally starts off with her plans.

Emily: Yeah, and then everybody just kind of falls in. But she, definitely, is the one that would call the meeting to order. If there was a person, that, you know, had the gavel, she'd be the one. She's not really like the spoken leader, but she usually takes control a little.

Dion: Why do you think it's so?

Emily: Probably because she's been doing this longer than any of us. She's been teaching for 23 years, and so she's got to the point where she needs to get things done in the right amount of time, and then we can play. With the rest of us, especially myself, I'm just kind of like, "Hey, it's OK. Everything's cool, it works." And she wants to make sure that it's all working and she's really got the kids in mind, and we all do, but she's the one that's, like I said, been doing this the longest.

Dion: For a long time.

Emily: Yeah. She's been teaching since I was two. So . . .

Dion: You have to have some kind of respect for that, right.

Emily: Oh, definitely, yes. (Vol. 1e, p. 48)

Brent, the other newcomer, has an interesting perspective on leadership in the fifth-grade team. Here is how he describes it:

I guess I would call it a two-headed leader. You know, with the two veterans, I guess we try to follow them sometimes when they say that they think alike and sometimes complete each other's sentences and stuff. They're both on the same wavelength a lot, and that's why I say, kind of a two-headed leader. And I'm glad to have that. You have someone to go to and check with, things like that. You know, I feel comfortable going to either one of them, it's not like I am afraid of one or ignore the other; I feel comfortable with all of them. (Vol. 1b, p. 17)

Although there is no formally assigned leader on the team, the team has leadership. Both newcomers agree that Claire and Dori share a co-leadership role. The team veterans also agree by their responses that they assume team leadership in the absence of a formal designation. Here is how Claire describes their operation:

We just role-share. This year with the two newer people, I think Dori and I have sort of taken over for a bit, but [if you get] to know Emily, she's a fairly strong personality. Dori and I are both very strong personalities, you might not have noticed that, we tend just to jump in and take over. Emily's a pretty strong personality, but that wasn't a problem. We don't have a leader, and sometimes one person will say, okay, I did it last time, you do it. Sometimes someone else will jump in and take that position of deciding what we're going to do. (Vol. 1c, p. 29)

Dori agrees with Claire that there seems to be a co-leadership on the team. Here is her perspective and why she believes the co-leadership exists:

Well, probably right now Claire and I are more of the leaders just because we have been here. In the past, I'd say we all pulled equal weight when there wasn't really a leader. Claire in the past has always been the person who was more of a schedule person, you could count on her if you forgot something, you'd go to Claire because she knew. If you wanted something done fast, in the past you went to Sarah because she was younger and she could do things a lot faster. So there were probably people who had certain qualities about them that we learned to rely on, but I don't think there was ever really a person that took over, or we pretty much went along with--if there were two people who wanted to do something, then I did what they wanted to do. If Sarah and I wanted to do something, then Claire would go along with us, so it was more of a majority kind of thing, I guess. Pretty much we would discuss things, and

as we discuss things, more ideas would come out of it, and then we would end up with one idea that we'd like the best and that's the one we went with. But I would think it was pretty equally shared, although this year is different because we have two new people; they're probably following our lead more. (Vol. 1d, p. 37)

It seems clear that, although there is no formal designation of a team leader, those who have been in the team the longest tend to take the leadership role. It appears that part of the reason for this is the way in which this team operates in planning their lessons. The practice of making individual teachers responsible for particular subjects tends to give those who have been doing it this way for a longer period of time a decided advantage. The fact that there is less reliance on individual textbooks for content puts older teachers at an advantage since they have had time to work with the material, and puts newer teachers at an initial disadvantage. Newcomers, then, have to then rely on the veterans for information and direction; therefore seniority is a factor. If the adage "Knowledge Is Power" applies to students, it certainly applies to teachers on teams too. The practice of co-leadership on the team is a positive model of collaboration for the new teachers. The issue of team leadership and how it operates on this team is a significant part of how these teachers experience teaming at Lakeside.

The Principal's Role

A look at the attitudes of the Grade 5 team regarding the role of the principal in team matters hints at the autonomous way in which this team operates. There is no doubt that the principal is considered as a source of direction and information. There is also the perception that his hands-off philosophy regarding team operation suits the team just fine. A wise principal who encounters an institutional practice such as teaming would indeed support it.

The responses of team members regarding the role of the principal reflect the relationship between longevity and autonomy. Annie's perspective reflects the feeling of autonomy when asked about the principal's role:

Meeting with us periodically and just as a regular principal just to know what the fifth-grade team is doing and what we're planning on working on. And he does that. Maybe we could set up, you know, a once a month thing. It's not necessarily on a regular schedule, but he comes and meets with us. He comes and meets us at other times so he knows what we're doing. Just supporting what we're doing and that's probably it. (Vol. 1a, p. 6)

Brent, a new member of the team, also shares this perspective about his perception of the principal's role.

He doesn't really get involved in the team itself, so to speak. He's pretty confident, I think, with the experienced teachers and he thinks we're in good shape. So he doesn't really plan or do things, but he does know what day our planning day is, and if he has any issues to discuss with the fifth grade in general, he knows that he can come on that day and discuss those things, which we've done in the past. But generally, you know, he's been pretty laid back about it. I think he feels, it's probably a strong collaboration and it works well and he's pretty confident in it, I think. And supportive too, very supportive with the team in the things that we do.

Dion: Are there any areas, you think that he could be more involved with your team?

Brent: You know, probably not. He's probably doing a lot of things that he should be doing as far as--other things in the building. But to impact the team in any way, I'm not sure there's really anything that he could jump out and do and we would have benefit right away. Other than a few suggestions here and there that might come up. What they would be at this time, I wouldn't know, but I think he would feel free, and we would welcome those kinds of things well. (Vol. 1b, p. 14)

Dori's perspective really reinforces the idea of the autonomous nature of this team, and gives a sense of how longevity and history impact teaming and the role of the principal at Lakeside Middle School.

Well, we've been through three principals since doing this, so I would say that actually, they haven't had a major role in what we've done, because before we had this wonderful planning period, which really does help the collaboration, we did it just during our own personal time. You know, if you believed in it, you found time to do

it on your own. And then it did help when we had principals who believed in it because they worked very hard at getting enough time so that groups could get together, and making sure that all the teams had a common planning time, because that didn't happen before. So if the group that is just starting to form, I think the principal would have a very important role because by making sure that there's time available for them to get together, and a principal doing that lets you know that's important to him also, and so that would help that happen, and so I would say for most schools and for most situations the principal would be key in keeping that going and getting it started. We just happened to have this going prior to teaming at the middle school. (Vol. 1d, p. 35)

Claire's perspective, which is even more candid, almost seems to relegate the principal to not really having a role in the teams.

Probably like most teachers, you can shut your door, do your own thing, except we shut our door and there's four of us together or five of us together and we do our own thing. Other than facilitating the time and he's there if we need him, but we really don't make use of him for decision making or anything. Usually we've made those decisions and we go to him with something we want to do....We don't need him anymore than that. It's not that we wish he was down here, it's just the things we do usually affect only us and so we are able to make our own decisions as long as we don't overlap someone else's time or something, we can decide whatever we want within our little pod of kids here, and if it overlaps into something else, yeah, he's always there to give us extra time and accommodations as we occasionally need to do. (Vol. 1c, p. 23)

Emily, the newest team member, perhaps sums it up well with her perspective of how much autonomy the team has from the principal:

I haven't seen him really. He approves the projects like going skiing or the picnic, 'cause we had to go to the library and we had the kids eating here, and he had to approve that, but as far as the day-to-day planning or the week-to-week planning, he doesn't really come around. If we have questions, he's there to answer them, but he doesn't really interfere.

Dion: So do you feel like your group operates with a lot of autonomy?

Emily: A lot, yes, definitely. (Vol. 1e, p. 45)

The principal at Lakeside appears to play a rather limited role in the operation of the teaching team in grade five. Members of the team feel adequate in dealing with

internal issues, and some feel that the level of involvement by the principal is satisfactory. The involvement of the principal is an important part of the experiences of this team.

Team to Team

The autonomous way in which the Grade 5 team operates may also have an impact on their interactions with other teams in the building. In the above interview regarding the principal's role, Claire remarked: "The things we do usually affect only us and so we are able to make our own decisions. As long as we don't overlap someone else's time or something, we can decide whatever we want within our little pod of kids here" (Vol. 1 c, p. 24). This statement reflects to some degree an attitude of insularity. It seems possible that if this is a part of the team philosophy, there would be little interaction with other teams.

During my interviews, I asked about team-to-team collaboration in the school. There seems to be little, and their attitude may account for this fact. There are other factors mentioned, though, which account for this. Claire shares her perception on collaboration with other teams:

We don't do much of that. There is very little of that done, and we've talked about it, but I think that the problem there again is that time factor. Because of the fact we have this nice long conference time that all within our grade; every grade has a different one, so the only time you'd have to collaborate would be before school or after school, and honestly, seventh and eighth grade eat lunch at a different time than us, and sometimes we don't see those people for a month at a time, so we really don't see much of the seventh or eighth grade. We eat with sixth grade so we talk to them, but we don't do much cross-grading fifth and sixth grade.

Dion: So it's a logistical situation?

Claire: Partly, yeah, partly. Partly because nobody has come up with a fabulous idea that we'd want to do like that. We do get some cross-grade activities, but they're like earth day, career day. They're usually decided by committees that plan that day and

everybody takes part in it. It's not usually something that we settle, let's get together with eighth grade and do something. I can't remember anything that we've ever done. I don't know about seventh and eighth grade; I don't think they cross very much either. (Vol. 1c, p. 24)

Annie echoes the same sentiment. There seems to be a desire, but not much has been done to make those desires a reality. When asked if her team collaborates with other teams, she responds:

Not a lot. Not a lot. And we're in the process right now of working with the other teams more. Carmen is getting set our database where she's going to input what we're doing in social studies and what the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are doing with social studies. So hopefully, if some of those get close to each other, if we're working on the same topic, maybe we could do a project together. So we're working on that. I think that would be great. And the fifth graders being the small guys of the building, I think it would be great to work with the eighth graders. You know, putting on a skit or something or having the eighth graders help the fifth graders, you know, maybe even tutor them at lunch time or before school, or just getting them together a bit more. And it sounds like we're trying to do that now. Because right now we really don't have any contact with them at all. I have no idea what they do. No idea. (Vol. 1a, p. 6)

Clearly, there is little meaningful interaction between the Grade 5 team and other teams in the school. Factors such as scheduling and self-sufficiency are reasons for this. There is a desire for more collaboration among the teams, but they seem not to have found a way to make it work.

Team Satisfaction

Team satisfaction is one critical area which determines development in collaboration. In my interviews I tried to determine through questioning which aspects of teaming gave the team members the most satisfaction. Here is Claire's response:

Probably the knowledge that these kids who leave this grade level all have been exposed to the same thing. No matter whether we have a new teacher come in; whether there's a weak teacher in the group, the plans are there, everybody's been exposed to all the same thing, and when they move on to sixth grade, although they

may not have all conquered everything, the background should all be there pretty equally among the kids. And it's fun to really get good in planning one area. I'm really proud of the science. I've worked on it long enough now so that science is really well developed. If I'd had to work on math and social studies at the same time, I'm sure it wouldn't be to that point. (Vol. 1c, p. 21)

Dori's perception is similar to Claire's, but she adds the element of the teacher's desire to collaborate with peers.

Well, I think teachers probably feel isolated if you're off by yourself, and I really need working with other adults. And the other thing that I already mentioned, is that I really think we're giving students a better curriculum by collaborating. I don't think that they would get the science plan, and I don't think the fifth-grade science program would be as good if I were planning it myself because I don't have a science background, and maybe after I got the background, would have the time to dedicate to it because my natural choice might be language arts and social studies, or whatever. So they're definitely getting a much better program by doing this and it also gives you an opportunity to work with adults. (Vol. 1d, p. 33)

It is readily apparent that the team's practice of having specific teachers plan lessons in areas in which they feel most competent contributes to the team members' satisfaction. Annie's perspective confirms this idea.

I think it's more calming as a teacher to know what everybody else is doing. You're not one teacher, hoping that you're hitting the right objectives in your teaching; there are other people that are helping you meet those objectives. And I don't know how it is in other schools, but I think that would be real difficult if you were an elementary school teacher and you had to prepare science, social studies, reading, and math for every day. I mean, that's a lot to study. Here, people kinda specialize in one thing and they share it with the rest of the group. (Vol. 1a, p. 2)

The area which seems to give the most satisfaction in this group is the peculiar way in which the group operates in planning lessons. Although the concept of camaraderie was mentioned, it did not seem to have as great an impact as their style of operation. It is interesting to note that, in several instances, Claire's name was mentioned as being a great help in planning science lessons, and thus she seems to have a significant impact on the team's satisfaction due to her skill and experience.

To gain another perspective on team satisfaction as well as how individual team members perceived their team, I asked during the interviews for each teacher to assign a letter grade to the performance of their teams.

Three teachers Dori, Emily and Annie felt that the team deserved an A- for performance. Brent was a bit uncertain, and gave a B+ / A- grade. Claire, who has been on the team the longest, gave the team a B. It appears that, on average, the Grade 5 team has the perception that their performance is on the level of an A-. It is interesting to note that the lowest grade, [B], was given by Claire, the team veteran. It is possible that she feels this way because the team is at a point where the new members cannot contribute very much and therefore the team is not operating optimally. Another possibility is that she has higher expectations because of her years of experience.

Another method which I used to describe team satisfaction was the team development rubric (see Appendix B, Table 10). The results of the development rubric comparisons for the Grade 5 team in Appendix B, Table 11, indicate that the team has an average description of 27.8. This classifies them as being very strong in their perception of development. Two outside sources, the counselor and media specialist, were used to corroborate the perceptions of the teams. The school counselor described the Grade 5 team as 25.5, and the media specialist gave 23.

All of the six descriptors--purpose, process, communication, involvement, commitment, and trust--indicate that this team appears to be strong (Appendix B, Table 12). The team members describe themselves at being highest in purpose, involvement, and trust. The lowest area was in communication (21). Perhaps this is because they need to spend extra time teaching the newcomers how to operate in their unique environment,

and therefore communicate on another level. Process and commitment (22 & 22) were also low. Again these descriptors of low scores may be due to having two new persons on the team. I have concluded therefore that satisfaction on this team is high (Appendix B, Table 12).

Stage in Tuckman's Model

Tuckman described a four-stage developmental sequence through which teams evolve in their interactions. The first stage is forming, which focuses on orientation and defining of membership. The second stage, storming, entails competition, confrontation, and disagreement. In the third stage, called norming, collaboration begins and cohesion takes place. And finally in the performing stage, there is optimal collaboration and creativity in problem-solving.

The Grade 5 team appears to be in the forming stage of their team development. The arrival of two new members has affected the team's previous operation enough to categorize it as such. If the two new members remain permanent members of the group, there will likely be a jump from forming to norming since the newcomers are able to work well with the established members and there are high levels of trust and purpose.

Summary

The Grade 5 team at Lakeside is unique because it is an elementary grade operating in a middle school. The team plans lessons in an interesting way. Each teacher is responsible for a specific subject, and shares prepared lessons for his or her teammates to teach. There are two new members on this team, and they appreciate the help that the team veterans give in lesson planning and teaching.

There is little disagreement in this team. The new members realize how limited their conception of the task at hand is, and generally defer to the more experienced members. The newcomers to this team all agree that they have had tremendous benefit from the experience of the veterans, and are satisfied to learn the new ways to enable them to keep up with the rapid educational pace.

Team satisfaction appears to be high for this group, and they perceive themselves as strong. The team seems to be in the forming stage of development because it has two new members who need to be integrated into the group. Despite the limited contributions the new team members are able to make in planning lessons, they feel accepted and valued by the team. They also contribute to helping this team learn skills on how to integrate new members. This helps to strengthen the teams.

Grade 6 Team

Some teachers are more comfortable to work with than others. You don't always see eye to eye in team planning. It's a matter of personal style.
--Angela

Of all the teams in Lakeside Middle School, I have probably worked as a substitute teacher in this team most often. The area adjacent to and surrounding the classrooms of this team is typically the most decorated in the building. Student projects usually deck the walls and ceiling.

The results of my pilot study with a member of this team several months earlier seemed to indicate that all is not well. Another indicator of potential relational problems stemmed from the fact that this is the only team where members expressed concerns about confidentiality, and wanted information on how I planned to guarantee anonymity.

The informant whom I interviewed from this team was more willing to be forthright during the pilot interview.

Team Overview

There are four members on this team. Two are male, and two are female. Here is an overview of each person.

Brian

One of the original team members, Brian has been at the school since 1979, and on the team from the inception of the team concept at Lakeside. He has taught in the school district for the past 18 years, and now teaches science and social studies. I first interviewed him during the pilot study.

Angela

Angela's teaching certificate is in elementary education. She has taught for 22 years, and began in this school district fresh out of college. She has taught in the sixth grade for 5 years, and is responsible for math and social studies.

David

David has taught for 27 years, all in this district, David began as a Chapter 1 remedial reading teacher. He then spent 6 years as a fourth grade teacher. He then spent 12 years as the district Language Arts Coordinator before joining the sixth-grade team at Lakeside in 1992. He replaced the team member who died.

Candice

Candice has taught for twenty-three years in a variety of schools before coming to

Lakeside. Her undergrad degree is in working with mentally impaired kids, and her graduate degree is in learning disabilities. She teaches special education in the sixth grade team.

Team Processes

The purpose of this section is to give the reader an idea of how this team experiences teaming. The section deals with their interactions in meetings, how the team operates, and how teaming is defined.

Team Meetings

The team meets once per week for 90 minutes in Angela's room. The group meets informally, and sits rather scattered at the front of the room. There appears to be a lack of cohesion even from the seating arrangement. Discussions usually center around scheduling, how classes will be rotated, and projects. On many occasions, the focus of discussion was behavioral issues of students. During many of the meetings, several teachers would be grading papers or reading. They were apparently not very interested in what was happening.

The overall picture of this team when they meet is one of boredom and lack of interest. Often, team members come in late and act very casually about it. The team meetings give the impression of a lack of interest and tension among the teachers.

Teaming Format

In the Grade 6 team, each teacher is responsible for planning and teaching their own lesson. This team uses an interdisciplinary teaming format. In this format, teachers

who specialize in particular subject areas are responsible for groups of students for part of the school day. These teachers come together to make plans which affect the entire program.

Definitions of Teaming

Two members of the team gave definitions of what teaming means to them. The others did not address the issue because my interviews were semi-structured. One of the team members had a definition which was teacher-focused, and the other was student-focused. This is Brian's definition:

You want to give and take, you want ideas that can go both ways. Some are rejected without great difficulty and others accepted. To collaborate is to use the strategies that you use with students. You brainstorm some ideas at first and don't reject them and then you go through some sorting. And if you do that then you'll probably have people who want collaboration. Otherwise, they won't collaborate with each other. I think collaboration is the ability to really hear and listen and then act upon what you really hear going on—a skill that we always work on. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)

I find it interesting that the word 'reject' was used twice in the definition. In the first instance, the rejection of ideas is said to be done 'without great difficulty'. His definition makes reference to brainstorming ideas and considering them before deciding to reject them. Teaming to Brian is teacher-focused, and his definition gives a sense of a conflicting process. Brian gave this perspective on teaming: "The more you involve people, the more places things are going to be forgotten. It's one of the negative things in this. Something always slips through the more you involve other people" (Vol. 2b, p. 11). It is obvious that Brian has concerns about teaming. As the most senior member on the team, this perhaps has an impact on team dynamics.

Angela's definition of teaming is more student-focused. In this quote, Angela

uses the term collaboration to refer to teaming. "Collaboration to me is working together to do what's best for students. Collaboration amongst teachers is vital. If we work together so it benefits the student than we're being successful in our collaboration" (Vol. 2a, p. 3). Successful teaming for Angela hinges on working together for the benefit of the students.

Team Strengths and Weaknesses

When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the group, the answers varied. One strength of the team according to Brian is the varied teaching styles. He feels that this is beneficial to students because as they move through the educational process, they will be better able to adapt to different teachers.

The weaknesses according to Brian have to do with a willingness to sacrifice one's point of view or philosophical position. He feels that teaming can work, but he is not sure if the intense effort is worth the possibility of failure.

Angela feels that their strength in teaming lies in their ability to team. She says, "I think the strength of our group is that we work well together. We all have some of the same feelings about teaching sixth graders. I think that we have different personalities, but we work well together because we complement each other" (Vol. 2a, p. 5). The weakness of the team, according to Angela, is the inability or reluctance to attend meetings on time.

David sees their strengths in this way: "I think we do some really nice things for kids" (Vol. 2d, p. 27). His perception of the team's weaknesses, on the other hand, is quite strong.

See, I need there to be a high level of trust and willingness to confide in your team. I don't think that exists in part because the sixth-grade team—parts of that team are very old, they've been together for a very, very long time, and they bring a lot of old baggage. (Vol. 2d, p. 25)

Candice has her own perception of strengths. She says:

I guess probably listening. I think most of the time everybody listens to what we have to say. And we may not necessarily agree, but somehow we manage to say this is the way it's going to be and we do it. But I think most of us, I'd say we're open-minded the majority of the time. (Vol. 2c, p. 16)

As far as team weaknesses go, Candice sees a need for more connections in their individual disciplines. She shares:

"Maybe working on interrelated our disciplines a little bit more in terms of you know working Natural Science and Language Arts and coming together and collaborating a little bit more in terms of what individual programs are" (Vol. 2b, p. 16).

There seems to be little or no agreement as to what constitutes the strengths or weaknesses of the team. Each person seems to have a different perspective. Candice is the only member on the team who felt that they collaborated well as a team. This perception is quite different from all of the other descriptors of what happens on the team, and is also different from her portrayal on the development rubric. It is possible that she was being generous to the team on this issue. Could this be part of the reason some team members perceive the team to be storming?

Challenges to Teaming

The responses of team members to the question "What do you think is the greatest challenge to teaming?" were quite varied. Here are the perspectives of various members:

Candice feels that keeping an open mind is the challenge:

I would say just making sure that everyone is open-minded enough to look into each other's ideas and don't get stuck feeling that is how I view something should be done and stop at that point. You really have to care about your members. You have to care about the people you work with, and you also have to overcome the fact that maybe there is something about their teaching style or them that drives you absolutely crazy. You have to overcome that and realize that you know that there's probably something that you do that I would do that probably drives them absolutely crazy. So you just have to be open-minded. That is the biggest thing. (Vol. 2b, p. 15)

Angela has another concern as a challenge, which at first seemed trivial in the larger scheme of things, but on further reflection turned out to be rather instructive. Her challenge has to do with time:

The biggest challenge is getting people to your meeting on time. Every Tuesday we're supposed to have a grade level meeting, and it's supposed to start at 1 o'clock, and often people aren't there at 1 o'clock, so we're kind of reluctant to start without everybody. But I feel like we should start at 1 o'clock otherwise we waste a lot of time waiting for the people that are straggling into our meetings. It's getting people to our team planning meetings that is probably the biggest difficulty. Getting them on time. (Vol. 2a, p. 3)

The problem of getting team members to come on time for meetings may at first glance seem trivial, but to me it indicates a larger problem. Perhaps it is a lack of motivation or interest in teaming. Angela uses the term 'straggling' to describe the entry of team members into the room seems to support the idea that there is not a lot of motivation to attend meetings.

David feels that the challenge to collaboration in his team is described in part with Tuckman's stages of team development. David comments:

I had read an article in an educational journal a couple of years ago and it talked about the idea of teaming and how teams evolve. And I was struck by, at the time I read the article, we had not evolved to that point. And so it was kind of interesting because some of the things that they were saying, I could see where we had been and I was curious to see when we moved forward as we continued our time together, what would happen. But basically, the article talked about a great deal of the collaboration and collegiality that initially starts out in a team situation. And I saw that in our team—we celebrated each other's birthdays, and whatever the case may be. But then

as time goes on, those levels seem to flatten out, the togetherness becomes less. There starts to be—and I don't want to call it a break down, but there's a change. It kind of moves from the happy family to the professional relationship. And I think that's really what happened in our situation. (Vol. 2d, p. 20)

It is clear from David's perception that his team's dynamic has shifted, and the togetherness which was once enjoyed no longer exists. The family feeling have now become formal professionalism. From the responses by David and Angela there seems to be some indication that this team has some issues that cause friction among the ranks. David goes to the past to describe when and why he feels the breakdown took place.

I think I am a quick-study—that's part of my problem. After 7 years I have to move on, because pretty much I've done it and I want to try something else. And my first year here at sixth grade was a lot of experimenting—just working with a block schedule to begin with and trying to work in classes of 70 or 75 minutes, there were a lot of things I wanted to do that I could see needed to be done. But you know I didn't have any experience under my belt to know when I came to the fork in the road, do I take the left or the right to make it happen. But you know, after that first year, and you have some experience, you look at those problems, and they're not really problems. And I think that in our instance, for our team, for some of our members, the fact that I was no longer helpless, floundering, flapping, that I could pretty much problem-solve, I think that kind of changed the dynamics of the working relationship—and not in a positive fashion. (Vol. 2d, p. 20)

The challenging of the status quo and the desire to start thinking and deciding for himself are among the issues which David believes changed the atmosphere within his team. David also thinks he is seen as a rebel because, as the newest team member, he was out of step with the others.

And there's an element of "rub" there, because all of a sudden you don't want to fit. You know my first year I was really naive. I sat around and swallowed all kinds of philosophies. Because I felt "here I'm in the Middle School and everybody's been here much longer than I have." And you know . . . the analogy to a teenager is perfect because I feel like I'm a teenager now. I don't want to be rebellious, but there are some things that I don't want to be a part of, that I don't want my name attached to a letter going home talking about retention, because I don't think that's necessarily the answer. So I think I'm perceived as being rebellious. (Vol. 2d, p. 21)

Brian has an interesting perspective on the issue of challenges in his team. It appears that his team has an identity crisis. The matter came up while we were discussing the team's effort to integrate curriculum within subjects. Brian shares:

So we'll have two new teachers almost certainly next year. It's a good time for us to rethink again. . . . In my mind, . . . maybe that would be a good opportunity to deal with that issue as well as other things when we bring in two new people. It's very easy to just let the program go on and say this is what we're doing. And I'm sure in the end we'll have to do a lot of that to survive. Maybe to bring in one or two new ideas and give them a try. Getting back to your real question, "How does the team get an identity," this would be a good chance for us to form a new identity with new team members. David and I will be here with Candice, the three of us touched the subject a little bit. So we're hopeful that this will be a good chance to do some of this problem solving with integration of subject matter. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)

It is quite interesting that Brian is hoping that the new team members who will come next school year will not only generate new ideas and assist in problem solving, but will give the team a new identity! What about the one they have now? Perhaps he is not happy with it. This is an indication that all may not be well on this team.

Death of a Team Member

Approximately 6 years prior to the study, the Grade 6 team suffered a tragic loss. A member of the team died. Here is a description from Brian of how the team was affected:

We had a teacher die about 6 years ago and David replaced her. Some of us had to try to pull Sandy together as part of the team because none of us knew that she had cancer of the brain. She would often forget things, fall asleep in class and be unlikely to try new things because it was just a physical requirement. And so lots of time was spent trying to build teamwork around someone who just couldn't really accomplish things that you would want so . . . I guess when we had that experience and when we developed our team, it took some time. (Vol. 2b, p. 9)

David, although he was not part of the team at the time of the teacher's death, was exposed to the situation as the district Language Arts coordinator. Even in that position,

he sensed that the team had its struggles. When asked about the effect the death had on the team, here is his response and to some extent his first sentence is startling.

If it was a team that wasn't storming already, I imagine that it would have had some impact. But here again you had three people working independently. I'm sure there was certainly concern, and it was also a very horrific group of students that year. And she left. It was just a bad situation for her as well as for the kids. . . . But that team as a whole—the three members of that team had never been together. (Vol. 2d, p. 24)

The death of a teammate is supposed to be an unfortunate and difficult situation.

For the Grade 6 team it was, but perhaps for different reasons. I sensed during the interview of one teacher who had worked with Sandy a tinge of guilt. Sandy seemed not able to function as others because of limitations caused by her weight and illness.

Perhaps she was resented for her inability to perform as expected.. Her death and the revelation of her condition perhaps left feelings of guilt. When I asked Brian about the initial feelings of the team when Sandy was diagnosed with brain cancer, his response was arresting. The full impact of his statements did not hit me until I subsequently analyzed his response.

Well, obviously there are two ways to look at this. One is that the team concept as we're operating now was not the way the building was operated at that time. So it was much more traditional. Each of us had our subject areas. Sandy's was Social Studies primarily. We each taught Language Arts. Sandy was quite overweight. Outdoor education was difficult for her, so actually she opted not to do that. Always it was another member of the school that took her place. That comes to mind as about as much as this kind of thing affected the teamwork. Certainly as individuals we knew each other. She was also the person who kind of had a music background, so Christmas caroling would be led by Sandra. When she was gone someone had to pick up the slack on those kinds of academic things. Every person dealt with it at their own level. We visited her of course. Eventually, a tree was planted in front of the building with student involvement. There was an assembly held here for the whole staff to pay tribute as they wished their memories. So as far as connections go with the other, it's limited. It was much more a traditional way of dealing with things when she was here. (Vol. 2b, p. 9)

Interestingly, there was not one phrase of remorse or affection used in discussions

I had with anyone on the team about Sandy. I wonder what kind of person she was. All the information related to me about her was descriptive, none was affective. Does her memory still affect the way the team functions today?

A picture of Sandy hangs in the corridor of the school near the main office. It was placed there the same year I conducted this study. When I asked about it, some teachers on staff did not seem to even know it was there. I asked to see the tree which was planted at the front of the building in her honor. There it stood, stark and leafless under grey winter skies. Spring would one day come, and it will erupt with color and life. Maybe her memory will then be revived.

The Principal's Role

In a similar way to the other team, the role of the principal at Lakeside seems to be minimal in this team. Candice's response indicates uncertainty about his role.

Well, I don't know I guess he needs to be there to support what the team's decisions are. Granted there are certain decisions that a team can't make unless we've consulted him, but for the most part I think he gives us the ball and expects us to handle things. And if we're expected to do that than I expect to be supported by that. So I guess support from the principal would be high on my list. (Vol. 2b, p. 17)

Angela has more definitive and strong feelings about the principal's role. She feels that he could accomplish more with the team, but she is happy with the latitude the team has.

I think the principal needs to sit in on our grade level meetings. Our principal did try that at the beginning of the year, and now I don't see him unless we invite him for a specific meeting. And when we do invite him there's either a concern or a problem so he doesn't get to hear all the good things that are happening. I feel like if the principal doesn't come to our meetings often enough, he loses touch with our team-unless we go to him. I know he's a very busy man, but once a week for an hour is not asking too much. (Vol. 2a, p. 3)

On the issue of team latitude, Angela gives credit to the former principal who supported and encouraged team autonomy. In addition, the issue of autonomy seems to have inadvertently caused another problem, individualism. There is no consensus on certain school rules. Angela continues:

I feel real comfortable that we have been given the latitude in our team to make our own decisions. That also came when Daniel Covey was principal because we weren't used to this teaming thing until Daniel gave us permission and he would say, "I'm not going to make the decision for you, the team can make the decision." So we felt more comfortable about making team decisions, then we didn't have to go to the principal and ask his advice what to do. And in a way that wasn't always good either because sometimes since we had a fifth-grade team, a sixth grade team, a seventh grade team, and an eighth-grade team, I almost felt like we had four separate schools because everybody was doing their own thing and to this day the teams don't agree on some of the school rules—like gum chewing is allowed in eighth-grade whereas in sixth grade it's not allowed. So we need to be careful, I don't think we should supersede the school rules. We need to get back together and have some common rules as a school so that we're all doing the same kinds of things. (Vol. 2a, p. 4)

David seems not to be sure about what he wants the principal's role to be, but he sees it presently as being a sort of referee. Again, the issue of a difference in individual philosophies comes up.

Presently with Keith, I perceive it to be one that tries to have the team work together, when differences occur to try to bring them to resolve so that the team can move on or so that it will not impact students. I think we have to be realistic and realize that adults will differ in opinion and there are people in this world who when you differ with their opinion can either say "that's fine" or it becomes a problem. And I think that's what the role of principal is to make sure that when differences do occur, that they don't escalate to the point that there's a breakdown from a team working together in collaborative efforts for kids. Keep in mind that I don't know if we'll ever always solve philosophical differences. But hopefully keep in mind that we all have a common goal and that is that we do want to team. We want kids to view us as a team. I've often kind of asked myself, "What is it I want from Keith?" (Vol. 2d, p. 23)

Brian voices a similar sentiment about the principal operating on a level of intervention, and the autonomy of the teams.

Well, we have limited use of the principal. From our experience, our team efforts are

primarily done independently. He would intervene at present just if some person had an individual child that the whole team had tried all their strategies unsuccessfully. I think you call on the principal to intervene on that level. That's probably as it should be. There could be more involvement. It all depends on what's the whole philosophy the building's running under. And I think that it's clear that our principal has a hands off policy on anything that is working as your team sees it. He rarely functions as a member of the core team. (Vol. 2b, p. 9)

It seems that the desire exists for the principal to play a greater role in the operation of the teams. How much of a role could be difficult to ascertain, since the teams enjoy their autonomy.

Team to Team

Like other teams in the school, this one agrees that there is little or no team-to-team interaction. Brian's reaction to my question about interaction between teams goes beyond the boundaries of his group. He identifies it as being school-wide.

There is really very little intercommunication with other teams in the building. There's always grand hopes as the school year begins and at the end of the year there are always new grand hopes laid out for the fall and surely we'll do that. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)

Brian gives a possible reason why he is perhaps not willing to associate more with other teams. This could possibly be the reasons for other people too.

I try to avoid as many committees as possible. We all do, and I'm pretty successful at it. You can alienate enough people that they don't want you on their committees. And I don't try to do that, but sometimes we just speak our minds and it can lead to how much people want to work with you. I worked on the Science Olympic committee this year, and that's been in such transition that it just drives me crazy that we just can't stay with one thing that was our original concept. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)

Angela identifies another factor that affects the limited interaction in teams at Lakeside: That factor is time. Here is her perception of team-to-team interaction.

We're really weak in that. We don't even have common lunch hours. The fifth-grade team and the sixth-grade team eat lunch together. The seventh-grade team and

the eighth-grade team eat lunch together so the fifth and sixth-grade teams very rarely know what's going on in the seventh and eighth-grade teams. And we meet once a month for staff meetings. Because the meetings are infrequent, some issues never get brought up or they are not resolved in that amount of time. (Vol. 2a, p. 5)

The members of the Grade 6 team agree that team-to-team interaction is minimal, limited by time, and the willingness of some people to collaborate.

Team Satisfaction

Each member of the team was asked to assign a letter grade to the performance of the team from their perspective. These grades served as one descriptor of satisfaction. These are the grades assigned: Candice felt that the performance of her team rated a B. Angela also felt that her team was on the level of a B. Brian felt his team operated on the level of a B-, and David felt that they deserved a C.

In comparison with the Grade 5 team, not one team member awarded his or her group an 'A'. This group appears to have a sense of where they are, and how they work together. While there is optimism among some team members, others plainly declare that things are not going well.

Another method which I used to describe team satisfaction was the team development rubric. The rubric describes team development in six areas (see Appendix B, Tables 10, 11, 12, & 13). The Grade 6 team had an average team descriptor of 24.5 which classifies them as being strong on the scale. The counselor and media specialist, who were used to corroborate the team descriptors, gave descriptions which were quite low for this team. The teams were described by these two at 15.5 and 21 respectively. These outside descriptions indicate that there is a feeling that this team is on track, but needs to develop in the areas of purpose, communication, and involvement (Appendix B,

Table 13). The areas of commitment and trust (18 & 18) were described as being highest on this team (Appendix B, Table 12).

From my observations and interactions with this team, I would not classify them as being strong. There appears to be tension and dissatisfaction about philosophical and procedural issues on the team. Teachers on this team have been in the district from 12-24 years. This probably accounts for high descriptors in these specific areas of commitment and trust.

Stage in Tuckman's Model

Tuckman and Jensen (1977) formulated four stages which teams pass through in their quest to collaborate optimally. Based on the analysis of the interviews conducted and observations made, it appears that the Grade 6 team is often in the storming mode. Some members of the team at times seemed reluctant to frankly express their opinions, but I think there is enough evidence to come to this conclusion. Evidence for my description comes from Tuckman's description, the response of a team member, the descriptor given by the school counselor and media specialist, and my own observations of this team.

When asked about the stage in Tuckman's model she thought her team was at, here was Candice's response:

I think for the most part we work well together. I know there are bumps and ups and downs to it, but I think at times we probably go through where we're performing. But I also know there are certain times we fall back into the storming section. You know where people get stressed out whether it's personal things happening at home that happen to be carried over at school or whether it's a situation that is just been real difficult for two people to handle with each other at the time. And so I think we fluctuate. I don't think it's a cut and dried thing that we've gone through the first phases, now we're just going to work beautifully together. I think there have been

times where it's been so smooth and great you feel like, wow our team is really together. And there are other times you fall back and you're like pulling your hair out and thinking maybe I should just pull my students out alone. And I'm sure they're thinking, "What is she doing in here. Why doesn't she just leave?" I'm sure that happens throughout the school year. But for the most part I think our teams work pretty well together. (Vol. 2c, p. 16)

David is certainly less ambivalent in his feelings about the team's stage. He feels the team is definitely in the storming phase. Here is his reaction.

Storming. And I don't know if there's a study of the length of each of these stages, but I alluded to earlier that I think we had a very short forming period. And maybe it was short because I was the new team member, you know Brian and Angela had worked together for 15+ years. . . . I actually think that . . . I know for a fact that sixth grade has always been really storming, and when I was asked to be a part of the team, it was by choice. And other people in the building had pretty much alluded to the fact that I was going to be the great hope, now that somebody new was coming in . . . because the old had been together for a long time. So people have felt, "You know David, your coming here is going to be a new chance." And I really thought for about a year and a half or two years that this was the case. But I think that at the beginning of last year we moved from that forming stage, unfortunately, to that storming stage, where we were through feeling each other out and realized that "wait a minute, there's something I want to stand up for. There's something I want to believe here, we have a difference here." After that point, the situation was different. The team dynamics changed appreciably after that incident. (Vol. 2d, pp. 23-24)

From David's response it is apparent that the Grade 6 team and their interactions were a source of concern for people outside the team, or more specifically, other teachers on other teams. David was seen as the solution to a longstanding problem. Things did not turn out as expected though.

David goes on to share some more of his experience of the team's dynamics before he came on board. He gives the impression that it was a stormy existence, with a battle for power.

I was the Language Arts Coordinator at that time, and my experience would be that what A would do, B wouldn't, and what B would do, C wouldn't do. And you know, pretty soon, my method of operation with the team was simple. Whenever I wanted to do something new with that grade I always sent it through paper and pencil first for

them to read. And then we came together because you never really wanted anybody to have a surprise, because at that point in time somebody would feel the need to control, or whatever. So, again you know I hate to say it, but in many ways what has happened is I think the sixth-grade teachers “of old” kind of looked like where we are now. We’re storming—which is unfortunate. (Vol. 2a, p. 25)

Time did not apparently change the stormy nature of the team. This outsider at the time realized the dynamics within the team and took pains to avoid confrontation and misunderstanding.

Despite the storming which occurs in the Grade 6 team, there are concerns about stability in the immediate future of the team. By next school year, the composition and dynamics of the team will change significantly. Angela shared some relevant information on this point.

I think our future is really up in the air right now, and maybe that’s causing a little tension within our group because next year I’ll be on maternity leave. Next year there should be four sixth-grade sections because right now there’s four fifth grade sections. So two new members are coming on the team next year—one to replace me and one as the extra person in sixth grade. So we wonder, all of us, because we are concerned about how it’s going to be next year.

Dion: And do you know who will be coming in both cases?

Angela: The person hasn’t been chosen that’s going to be my sub, and we haven’t heard who is going to be the extra sixth-grade teacher. Some of those decisions need to be made so that the team can start planning for next year.

Dion: What kind of impact do you think that might have on your team? You have two new people coming in, but you don’t know who the people will be?

Angela: I think right now it just causes us all to be kind of on edge and wondering how next year is going to be. Of course I know where I’m going to be, so I feel pretty calm. But it would be better for the other people on the team to know the persons who will be chosen before I leave so they can start working with the team. (Vol. 2a, pp. 6-7)

There appears to be concerns about the newcomers who will join the team for the next school year. Despite the storming stage which the team seems to be in at the moment, the group faces the challenge of leaving their comfort zone, and having to revert to the forming stage. The situation is causing concern about the future of the team. A longitudinal study of this team should yield some interesting data.

Summary

It is apparent that the Grade 6 team has many issues to deal with. They are in the storming stage, but much of the storming appears to be subdued and under the surface. The death of a team member several years ago still seems to have some effect on the thinking of team members.

I received some disconfirming data from this team. The outside persons described it as being low on the team rubric, while the team members describe themselves as more moderate to strong. Also, Candice describes the ability to team as a strength of the group, while the data from other sources indicate otherwise. Although I cannot account for these differences in perception, most of the data indicate that the team is not as strong as the rubric results suggest. Two of the team members agree that their team is storming, and most of the data collected seem to corroborate this.

Despite the difficulties, the members are very professional in their dealings with each other, and appear to be competent educators. I have observed the members of this team for several years, and have discovered that while they have difficulties, they have the welfare of their students as a priority.

CHAPTER 4

LAKESIDE UPPER-GRADE TEAMS

The dynamics of your team takes on the personality of the members of your team. Our personality is a little bit more conservative and a little bit more old school. That is why sometimes you need a kick in the pants. That is what teaming does. --Adrian

Grade 7 Team

Team Overview

The Grade 7 team is one of two which I originally chose to conduct my research on. My reason for choosing this team, originally, was because it has team members who have been at this school for a long period of time, and I wanted to observe whether longevity plays any role in the teaming process. One unique feature of this team is the fact that it contains in my opinion, two individuals who have very different personalities. Despite this, they appear to work well together, and provide the team with good leadership. Here is an overview of individual members.

Barbara

For the past 18 years, Barbara has been at Lakeside Middle School. She is certified to work with emotionally impaired students, and also has had training in dealing with learning disabilities. As the special education teacher on the team, she has been resistant to the practice of a fully inclusive classroom, preferring to pull out her students

in the traditional way. Her strong views on this does not meet the approval of many. This is her final year before retirement. She has spent 15 years in the school district.

Adrian

Without a doubt, Adrian is the loudest and most boisterous teacher in the school. He is stocky and has a loud voice. Whenever he enters a room, he changes the atmosphere, with his unique humor, and the conversation to the business at hand. He is certified in elementary education, teaches science and language arts, and has been at the school district for 29 years. Adrian prides himself as being at the school from its inception, and is perhaps the most respected teacher in the building.

Debra

Debra is the newest member of the team. She is filling in as a long-term substitute for another team member who is on an extended assignment. There is a possibility that this team member she is filling in for may not return, and Debra is hoping for a permanent position. This is her first year teaching, and she has an infectious enthusiasm for education.

Celeste

Celeste was one of the two teachers whom I conducted interviews with during my pilot study. She is a math teacher with many years of experience. When you walk into her classroom, you immediately get the sense that she prizes high academic attainment. A diploma from her high school and degrees from a university (all with honors) adorn the wall behind her desk. There is evidence in her classroom that her students have done

well in math competitions. Celeste is very composed and businesslike, always trying to set the standards higher. A consummate professional, Celeste is well respected in the school. She has been in the school district for 25 years.

Team Processes

The Grade 7 team experiences team processes in several ways. Members do it through their team meetings, teaming format, how they define teaming, dealing with new members, and relating to previous teaming experiences.

Team Meetings

The Grade 7 team seems to be the group in the building which operates least like a team in the traditional format. The team meets in Celeste's classroom on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week at 8:30 a.m. In a typical meeting, the members will assemble generally on time and sit in a loose circle at the front of the room.

The format by which this team operates is that each member plans his or her individual lessons, then when they come together, they share their plans and solicit feedback. Much of the responses center around how their individual plans may link with a project or program planned for the school. At times, there is an effort to integrate curriculum across the subjects, but that seems to pose some problems.

The meetings also tend to focus a lot on dealing with student issues. The team may brainstorm on a method of dealing with a particular student who has behavioral problems, or on trying to control the flow of students in a particular area of the school. On many occasions when disciplinary problems are discussed, and team members wonder why particular students act up, Adrian seems to always have some inside information on

what is happening in the home or in that student's personal life. Adrian has a gift for connecting with students.

The team meeting is usually subdued and mundane, and Celeste usually is in control. When things seem too quiet or the focus of the meeting seems lost, Adrian usually throws in some unusual humor with a loud voice, and takes over the meeting. He sometimes uses words that are borderline for use in a professional setting. When he has had his say, and things are back on track, Celeste resumes her role. It is so interesting how Adrian can take over a meeting and change the entire atmosphere of the room. Older members have learned how to graciously cope, but new members have some difficulty dealing with his unique humor, choice of words, and style.

There appears to be a desire on the part of this team to collaborate more on interdisciplinary issues, but there seems to be some limitations and obstacles. This group spends a lot of time focusing on student issues, and seems to really have students at heart. This desire to facilitate students is one way this team experiences collaboration.

Teaming Format

The Grade 7 team operates by having each member plan individual lessons, then when they come together, they share their plans and solicit feedback. This is an interdisciplinary format. Many of the responses center around how individual plans may link with a project or program planned for the school. At times, there is an effort to integrate curriculum across the subjects, but that seems to be a challenge.

New Team Member

One goal of my study was to determine how new team members are assimilated

into teams. The Grade 7 team has one new member this year. Debra is the new member on the team, and has quite an interesting background. Here she describes her experience:

This is my first year teaching. We moved here about 6 years ago, and when my daughter went to Kindergarten I decided to go back to college and get my degree. I have always wanted to be a teacher, but I was never really encouraged to go to college when I was younger. I was the oldest of five children and I saved the money. That was a big issue in our family. My husband also encouraged it. I started out at a local college and got my 2 year degree there. I graduated with honors and I was real surprised. I thought, I can really do this with a family and a husband too. So, I convinced my husband that I needed to go to the university. He was a little resistant at first. He felt that now that I had my little 2 year degree I needed to find a job. I did go to university; it took me 6 years. I now do what I like, and get paid for it. (Vol. 3d, p. 22)

Debra has a commitment and love for teaching that is obviously very strong. I was interested in finding out what her experience in collaboration with this new team has been. As a new teacher, how was she treated by this team?

This is my first experience of working with a team and I really appreciate it and really like doing that. The team, with their experience, have been able to share with me some of the things that I wouldn't have known coming in. For example, if one of the children I know maybe is having some difficulty and I bring up that name then they will say, "We have had their parents or their brothers and sisters in the past and they were like that, or there is some difficulty at home or something. I don't even live in this community, so they are more aware of things and can help clue you in. (Vol. 3d, p. 22)

Debra described the personal attention and welcome she received when she came aboard as a new team member on her first day:

My first day here Celeste met me in the office, gave me a big hug, walked me down to the room, and let me in. She made me feel very welcome. Adrian was very welcoming too. Adrian has a real funny sense of humor and once I figured that out I thought O.K. I can handle this. He is a no-nonsense person in a sense. Basically, I look to them a lot when they talk and then I feel I learn a lot from them especially about the procedure and the environment and what the expectations are in the building. I felt when I came in, that I wanted to work full time. Even though I was isolated I was going to make it because I really wanted it, but they made the transition for me really pleasant. It was a very positive experience. (Vol. 3d, p. 23)

That initial greeting and caring that Debra felt was an important step in integrating her into the team. However, Debra expressed a feeling of isolation despite the warmth of the welcome. I suspect that the team's practice of planning in isolation may be a factor in her feeling that way. As time goes on she may begin to feel more connected to the group as she gets to know them.

As time progressed, Debra seems to have found her niche on the team, and feels that her contributions are worthwhile and respected. Her place of respect on the team came from hard work. Here is her description:

I think I worked my way to being my fourth part of the team. The Renaissance Fair that we are putting on, Adrian and I had talked and had developed the idea together, and I think that I have been able to contribute my share of this. I do feel that they have listened to my ideas, my visions, and tried to go that route. This Renaissance is new. It has not been done in the school for a long time and they are not experienced with it either and I am the new kid not knowing what we can do and can't do in the building, so we are kind of going through it blindly. I do feel their support though and it is like any team, if everyone carries their load it will turn out fine. (Vol. 3d, pp. 23-24)

What a balanced perspective from a new team member! Debra is willing to contribute and carry her share of the weight on the team. This attitude has probably accounted for the respect she has gained from her team.

Barbara has some positive comments about Debra, which support the portrayal of her being a hard worker and contributor on the team. Barbara shares:

I really think we work well together considering the fact that Debra is the substitute teacher. She has been here all year and she has fit in very well with the group and we have appreciated that a whole lot. It is kind of tough taking someone new into a group and expecting the same kind of results that you had before. I think as a group this year we have done very well. (Vol. 3b, p. 12)

Celeste also concurs with the fact that Debra is a hard worker:

Right now in our team, we have just come up with a good team project. We are doing

a Renaissance Fair. That worked out well. I am not so sure that I would have done that had I not had teammates who were equally working as hard as I was to get that accomplished. I can certainly take Debra coming into our team as a good addition. She works very hard and she is very easy to get along with. (Vol. 3c, pp. 19-20)

Respect on this team appears to come from hard work and production. Debra has certainly gained the respect of the team early.

Previous Teaming Experiences

One goal of my study, was to explore the possible impact that previous teaming experiences have on teacher attitudes during the study. To get an idea of this dynamic, I asked team members about their previous experiences collaborating with others in the educational process. Celeste's experience illustrates the power of narrative in sharing experiences.

I began my teaching career in Lake Heights and replaced a teacher who was on a leave of absence. I taught there for 2 years. My first class was a really difficult class. I had 29 students in the sixth grade. That was the group that made me. I was replacing a teacher who had been teaching for 22 years and she was a large woman and very regimented in the way that she taught. I was coming in mid-year because she was taking a leave of absence to see if she was ready for retirement. So I sat in initially in the parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first semester. I was really set back by the initial conference because a parent came in and her question was, Jerry [a student] was adopted, how do I give him back? I thought, what am I getting into? There were many things about that group of students. They had really a lot of emotional needs. Two young men had lost their mothers within 2 months prior to my coming. One was the youngest of nine children and his mother had died of cancer. The other was a little boy whose mother had just up and left them. Thirty years ago that was not very common. I had one little boy who would lay across the top of his desk and wet his pants and play with toys. I came to find out through the social worker that the parents thought he was from the devil and the other children were from God and they would lock him in a closet every morning. I had a little girl who had been abused and of course at that time coming from this area, many of these things that I was experiencing were not problems that we would have here. I was just really struggling. On a particularly difficult day, I was caught in the hall by the next door teacher. There were four of us that taught sixth grade and of course I was the youngest. I was just 21 when I started teaching. The teacher next door just happened to come out of her room at that time. I was in tears. I didn't know what to do with these kids. She

said, O.K. Celeste I have observed your teaching. You have many good qualities. You are a good teacher. You have to let them know that you are the teacher. If you can't do that then you are being a victim of the profession. So, she turned me around and aimed me back in there and I took the students into the next year. We made it through. I think that was the turning point. (Vol. 3c, pp. 16-17)

It is quite obvious that Celeste had a stressful experience in her first classroom. Her difficulties were noticed and helped by a teacher who acted as a mentor. This teacher, Celeste later attested, teamed with her in preparing lessons and classroom management. Such positive experiences apparently have helped to shape Celeste's attitude toward teaming today. She continues:

When I worked with the fifth-grade staff they too worked very collaboratively. We worked as a team to teach sex education. That was new. We would meet and plan at least once a week. The teacher next door had a passion for science and so we traded students. I taught the social studies and she taught the science. So we did a lot of collaborative work. The principal that I had at that time was one that I have always admired. He also ate lunch with all of the staff. We had an hour lunch which was quite unusual, but they had it set up where the students could spend half an hour eating and then half an hour they were outside doing an activity. He would come into the lounge and have lunch with us so we could in a less stressful manner discuss issues and things that were going on. We also did education as a team and the principal was a part of that team and working with us. So, I did have a really good experience I would say my first year of teaching. . . . It had been a good experience and it set a high standard. That was something that when I think of teaming and working together to get a goal accomplished, that certainly is a model for what I have in mind when we work with a team. (Vol. 3c, pp. 17-18)

Positive early experiences in Celeste's case, have shaped her perspective even to this day. Do other teachers on the team have similar experiences? It appears so. Barbara has also attested to a positive experience in her first encounter with teaming. Isolation was the norm in her many years as a special education teacher. Several years ago, when Barbara came to the Grade 7 team, things changed.

Teaching teams didn't really exist at the time I first came here, but there was a lot of collaboration between myself and other teachers. Of course there had to be, but when I received students, it wasn't interfering with what they needed to do in another

classroom. It has always been a cooperative thing. I think the first real experience I had was when I moved to the seventh grade. So that has probably been about 4 or 5 years. I appreciate it because it is a different way of working with students in a regular classroom. I get a chance to observe them in a regular setting, more than I did before when it was strictly a pull-out program. It pays off in a lot of ways because it gives me some ideas as to how to help the students better cope with their problems in another setting than normal. (Vol. 3 b, p. 9)

For Barbara, working in a classroom with another teacher in an inclusive atmosphere rather than a pull-out program has definite benefits. Interestingly, her perception of being in class with another teacher was seen as 'interfering'. Her present experience seemed to have changed her perception.

Definitions of Teaming

Teaming has many definitions. In order to understand how members of this team perceive this concept, I asked for a definition of the term. These are the responses:

Debra: "Sharing what we are doing in our own curriculum and then planning together. . . . We are all going on our own path, but we are all reaching the same result at the end. . . . Respect for each other's way of doing things and don't feel they are right or wrong. . . . Respect for each other's paths and whatever we contribute to the plans that we make for the lessons" (Vol. 3d, p. 24).

Adrian: "Give and take, working together, knowing what each other is doing" (Vol. 3a, p. 4).

Celeste: "Working together for a common goal" (Vol. 3c, p. 20).

Barbara: "Working together to help students that are low functioning and helping them to succeed. Also, working with the teachers in a cooperative way to make sure that success is met" (Vol. 3b, p. 10)

The definitions given by team members have the concept of working together as a common point. Debra, though, includes points such as respect, individuality, and being open to new ideas as important parts of teaming. Debra uses the metaphor of various paths which lead to the same destination. Perhaps as a new team member, or as a new teacher, her perspective is slightly different from the group. She seems more willing to take a different road in order to reach the team goal. The issue of stagnation and getting in a rut comes to the fore when we look at challenges the team faces.

Team Strengths and Weaknesses

When I asked the members of this team to share what were the group's strengths and weaknesses, my intention was to get a clearer picture of how well they worked together, and to determine if they have given thought to these issues as they relate to team collaboration. Some of the answers I received on the issue of strengths and weaknesses were different; they show the varying perspectives of the team. There was one theme, however, which recurred, which had to do with concern for the students.

Barbara feels that humor is an asset to the team; however, I have noted that she is not a particularly humorous person. Perhaps that is why she appreciates it. Barbara says:

I think one good strength is humor. A lot of times we feel kind of overwhelmed with some of the problems that soon come up with students and situations in the classroom. I think the fact that we can have a sense of humor when we talk about it; it helps us to come to better conclusions. I feel that we are all capable of discussing a student and we usually come to pretty much the same conclusion as to what that student is doing. We exchange ideas on how to strengthen those successes or how to help a student where there is no success. (Vol. 3b, p. 11)

Being a special education teacher, it is natural for Barbara to have the achievement of students as an important part of her concern. Humor on the team appears

to diffuse some of the tension related to dealing with difficult students and their problems.

Debra, on the other hand, perceives the strength of the group as the ability to carry through with plans. There is also the element of group support. Debra shares:

When we plan something we do it. We follow through, and I think we share camaraderie as well. The seventh grade is a difficult grade. The kids are up one day and down the next. Their emotions are to the extreme, really happy or really low, and I think that one of the things we do best is we are able to discuss what happened maybe with a student and say O.K., it is going to be better. So we give support to each other on good days and bad days. (Vol. 3d, p. 25)

Debra appreciates the team's ability to get the job done, and their support of each other and the students in difficult times. This team appears to be very student-centered in its approach to education.

Adrian, in his assessment of the strength of the team, also focuses on students. He strongly believes in relationships.

I think that one thing that we concentrate on is, you gotta get to know kids. You gotta be able to relate to the kids, to get a relationship with the kids. I think research has shown us that the most important thing that kids need to be successful learners, is a good relationship with an adult. That is one of the things we develop. (Vol. 3a, p. 4)

When I asked Celeste about the team strength, she gave a different perspective, and then went on to state what she feels various team members' teaching styles are:

Our teaching styles, I think, would be our strengths. We are different. We like to offer students a much different approach. At one of our in-service meetings here we had an inventory of our teaching styles and I tend to be real concrete. Although as I have been involved with a team, I have been able to ease up a little more and wing it a little more than when I used to. Adrian can go with anything and he is very well bred and he often gives our group a lot of different view points. I would say that Debra certainly being new offers a real freshness to our team and helps us to take a look at that in ourselves. Definitely for me that is her strength for the team. Barbara, as a member of the team, is getting ready for retirement so she also takes a look at the future and this year, I have seen her take a less active role. I know initially for all of us learning how to do inclusion with special education is difficult and she is

extremely patient and a very caring person. So, she offers that personal strength to the team. I guess I am dependable although sometimes by weekend I have taken on too many things. I think we all enjoy what we are teaching and that always makes you a better team. (Vol. 3c, p. 20)

The Grade 7 team seems to have various areas of strength. Some adjectives which can be used to describe members of this team are: flexible, well-bred, fresh, patient, caring, dependable, and concrete. I have also noted that Celeste sees Debra and her presence on the team as an asset, because she brings freshness to the team, and helps them to reassess their operation.

In addition to their strengths, I also inquired about the team's weaknesses and areas in which they can possibly improve. Answers to this question were more difficult to obtain, but I got two responses.

Barbara feels that communication was one weakness. She speaks of it in the past tense as if it is no longer a problem. Barbara said, "It wasn't always easy, and it took a while for us in the beginning to get used to the fact that we could communicate fully" (Vol. 3b, p. 11). After being isolated as a special education teacher in her own room for so many years, the concept of teaming must have been awkward at first. She has since overcome that and feels more comfortable.

The perception that Adrian has about the team's weaknesses goes back to what seems to be his pet peeve, that is integrating the curriculum. Adrian says:

We need some more time learning multi-curricular stuff; we need to really work together looking at how we can integrate curricular cross sections. See, there is another influence, we are now becoming focused on meeting a test-driven curriculum. That almost keeps away the multi-disciplinary stuff. There are a lot of things working against us that are causing things to remain the same. (Vol. 3a, p. 7)

In the area of strengths and weaknesses, this team seems aware of these attributes

in themselves and also in the group. The Grade 7 team appears to work well together and is very student oriented.

Challenges to Teaming

Working together can be a daunting and stressful experience for teams. I wondered about the peculiar challenges of working together in this group. Barbara sees time as the challenge.

Sometimes, there is a problem with just having your meeting. Just having the time to. There are so many other demands on our time besides just planning and so forth. I think that this is the biggest challenge just to always have the time to sit down and look at what we are doing and planning together. (Vol. 3b, p. 10)

Adrian sees the challenges to his team from a different perspective. He believes that they need to be more open to new ways of operating. Also, having a truly interdisciplinary team is his desire. Here he relates his perspective:

You have to look at it from my perspective. I think what I have learned is that you have to be able to function the way the team functions best. This year we are doing more of that [interdisciplinary teaming], because we don't have Don. [Don is the teacher who Debra is filling in for.] Again this is not a criticism of Don, but that is not Don's style. Don is a great guy and a hard worker. If we would say we are going to do this, he would be right in there helping us. Now, he never got us into that area [interdisciplinary teaming], where as Debra was a little bit more dynamic. The dynamics of your team takes on the personality of the members of the team. Our personality is a little bit more conservative and a little bit more old school. That is why sometimes we need a kick in the pants, like hey we are going to do this, this way. It is too easy to not do it. You do need to sit down and that is what teaming does, it gives you the chance to do it. Whether you do it or not, you have the opportunity. (Vol. 3a, p. 6)

It appears that a previous team member, Donald, was quite resistant to new approaches, and this affected the whole team. Having Debra come in with her zeal to try new things, and her attitude of working hard, has helped the team to consider new

approaches to teaming. The fresh perspective which Debra brings to the team seems to be appreciated by Adrian.

Celeste has another type of concern, a problem with being set in her ways. This is a recurring theme with other individuals on the seventh-grade team. She shares this viewpoint:

I think there is a mutual respect among the members here. We still, and I would worry if we didn't, but we still probably don't agree on everything and my feeling is that makes us a better group if you don't all do things in the same manner. Sometimes we get upset with each other and after you have grown older you've changed and become more set in certain ways and, sometimes, it is hard to break the mold. (Vol. 3c, p. 19)

Here again we see the feeling that the team members seem set in their ways; despite this, there is mutual respect among them. Celeste continues:

It was very difficult for me when we did move to teams. I felt like I was losing my identity. I was supposed to be a math teacher. The students recognized me as a math teacher and I really enjoyed having both seventh and eighth grade. I really felt like I was giving up a lot of my identity when I went to just being a seventh-grade teacher. That view as a math teacher I thought I had lost. I don't feel that way now but I did really feel like I was losing my identity. Change is not always the easiest to me. I found that it is more difficult as I have grown older to make big changes in my life. (Vol. 3c, p. 19)

For Celeste, what she teaches is a big part of her identity. The middle school teaming concept attempts to portray the teachers in the grade as one team instead of individual subject teachers. This was a challenge for Celeste, but she seems to have overcome it.

Celeste shares another challenge which she believes that all the teachers in the building share. It has to do with ownership. Many teachers on the teams were present when the school was planned and built. They consulted on various aspects of the

planning and programs, and as a result, feel that the school truly belongs to them. Celeste shares her concern:

There is a real ownership among the teachers for the district for the building especially. I would say a difficult experience is when we have changes in administration and people who do not understand the history that we feel. There is a feeling of ownership towards our school. We are always comparing one administration against the ideal that we have had. (Vol. 3c, p. 21)

For Celeste, understanding a sense of the history and feeling the teachers have toward the school is important. If there is a constant comparison of administrations, it is probable that none will ever match up to the ideal. If progress is to be made, they have to get beyond the past and work toward the future.

Debra's view of the challenges on the team echos one important point which most of the others have identified. The problem of being set in their ways comes up again.

Debra shares this view:

I would say at the beginning it was understanding where everybody is coming from. Knowing the different personalities. I think my greatest challenge was accepting the fact that they had been here longer and had more experience, but I was seeing it as being set in their ways and not open to new ideas. I have kind of gone on and I have been able to share some of my ideas or visions. They have been real open. I think it started maybe as a challenge. It could have been my reluctance to sharing my visions at the beginning, not being sure of how I will fit in and where. That changed, I don't see it as a challenge anymore. (Vol. 3d, p. 24)

There has been one recurring area which seems to challenge the Grade 7 team. That is the habit of doing things the same way, and being resistant to change. One good thing about the responses to this issue on the Grade 7 team is that the members are aware that this is a problem. Awareness is the first step to solving a problem, but not the only step. Perhaps a future study can determine if and how this team deals with this problem.

I believe that this section provided an answer to one reason why I specifically

wanted to interview this team. I suspected that getting stuck in a rut would be a problem in a team whose members were in the school for the longest period of time. The data seem to have supported my hunch.

Pull-out vs. Inclusion

The issue of inclusion has been one of the most controversial topics in the area of special education (Cramer, 1998). It was no surprise to discover that it was also an issue at Lakeside Middle School.

Barbara, the special education teacher for the Grade 7 team, has a unique perspective on teaming. When I first started teaching as a substitute at Lakeside, Barbara was the only special education teacher who seemed resistant to greater inclusion of special education students in the classroom. I had overheard comments that she was set in her ways and probably would not change.

After hearing comments about Barbara's reluctance to the idea of inclusion, I decided that it was important to get her perspective on this matter. Her reply was enlightening:

I think that this cooperative teaching and team teaching is an excellent idea and especially since I can combine it with taking the students out to work with them. I think that helps a whole lot. When you get to the point where they can no longer be pulled out to be worked with privately on a small group basis, that has proven to be difficult. You'll see some signs of that in the eighth grade where they don't have a pull-out program such as I have. So, I think we have to look at full-time placement of special education students, and that we are careful. (Vol. 3b, p. 13)

Barbara expresses her belief that there are benefits to having a pull-out program where students receive part of their instruction in a separate room with her, rather than full inclusion, where special-needs students are fully integrated into the regular classroom

setting. She also points out that the Grade 8 team, which practices full inclusion, may be experiencing some difficulty. I encouraged Barbara to share with me her rationale for continuing to have students pulled out of regular classes for special instruction. She replied:

Well, if you have a student that is especially low functioning and has a great deal of trouble with reading, for instance, I find that it is helpful to have them out for language arts, and be in a separate spelling program. When they get instruction in the other rooms, very often they don't understand exactly what happened. I can bring them back here and then go over the instruction a second time, and then move them through step by step particularly in math and in science. When they have to take notes, that is very difficult for some of them, so rather than have them just sit there and waste their time thinking 'I can't do it', it is good that I can bring them in here. So, they have the opportunity to be in the classroom and to learn whatever they can, but they need some additional help so that is when I pull them out and move at their own pace and learning style. . . . Even sometimes I will cut the assignment. Like in math, they only have to do half the problems rather than the whole thing or something like that. So that they get enough of it that they understand it. (Vol. 3b, p. 13)

It is clear that Barbara thinks that it is important for some students to be in a separate program, for part of the day in order to give them some extra assistance. Since the Grade 8 program which practices full inclusion, was mentioned as having some difficulty with the practice, I asked her to elaborate on the issue:

They practice total inclusion. I have a couple of students that I am really concerned about for next year just for that reason. . . . I think that there will be some difficulty in adjusting assignments and so forth for them. When they are pulled in here, the other students aren't as aware of the fact that they might have a shorter assignment or that it is revised in some way to meet their needs. But when they are in the regular classroom full time, they are going to be very much aware of that and there is always going to be somebody that is going to object. Well, why do I have to do so many problems and he doesn't have to do as many? There are social things involved as well as academic. (Vol. 3b, p. 14)

For Barbara, total inclusion has drawbacks which are academic and social. The academic problem from her perspective is that there will be difficulty in adjusting assignments for the students to meet their individual abilities. From a social perspective,

there will be the appearance of unfairness when some students are seen to have less work than others. Barbara feels that these problems can be avoided by having a pull-out program.

The greatest concern for this teacher, however, seems to be how her students in the seventh grade will adjust next school year to the eighth grade practice of full inclusion. The fate of pull out in the seventh grade will be uncertain next school year also, since Barbara will be retiring.

The desire to facilitate students is obvious on this team. Their concern for the students extend beyond their time in middle school. This concern is part of a goal which helps to strengthen this team. They are willing to work together in assisting students through the middle school years.

Again, the issue of autonomy in the teams comes up in my mind. There is apparently no uniform practice for the teaching of special education students at Lakeside. At least here we have two teams who operate differently, and I wonder what impact this will have on students who have to move from one grade to another, and encounter varied practices.

The Principal's Role

The principal at Lakeside no doubt is seen as an important component to the practice of teaming. On the two previous teams which were analyzed, there was a desire to have the principal play a more active role on the teams. This team feels no different, but they will take their concerns and criticism to another level.

Barbara shares her view about the principal's role on her team. From her

perspective, his main contribution is in the area of conflict resolution.

For a large part he comes in once in a while for a meeting with us and it is usually because we have reached an impasse where we can't resolve something ourselves and we feel we need his input, and that is when he usually comes to our meetings. We don't have a regular meeting time with him. . . . He is a good listener. I would say, more than anything. He just moves us into reaching some conclusions. There have been times when we have made some specific suggestions to him as to resolving certain problems and he has always been open with them. (Vol. 3b, pp. 11-12)

Debra as a new teacher also feels that the principal should participate on the teams more often. She shares the view that the principal is not really a part of the team.

He comes to our team meetings when we invite him. We have approached him several times with different procedures that we would like to have done and we have already typed them up ready to present to him and he approves them. Other than that he doesn't come unless we invite him or he wants to see us for something. In the past when we have asked him for certain procedures or policies, he has been supportive. I think it is the way we presented it, which made him real supportive of it. . . . I don't feel that he is a part of the team. (Vol. 3d, p. 26)

When asked if she feels that the principal should be a part of the team, Debra responds:

Yes, I do. I guess my view of the role of a principal is someone who is part of the team and someone who is at least in and out of the classrooms a little more. He needs to come into the classroom, and I think he will understand our pulling for stronger discipline rules. I think he has heard them and they are working on it. I would like him to be more of a team member than he is now. I think if he was, we would all feel like it is our school and we are working together to make it a great school. I am not sure where his role is except for the principal in the office. (Vol. 3d, p. 27)

Debra certainly feels that the principal needs to play a greater role on her team. The autonomy which other teams seem to enjoy does not seem as much appreciated on this team. Celeste, however, is a bit more sympathetic with the principal, though she still feels he could be more involved.

I would like to see him take a more active role in all of the teams. I know he has many concerns with other things that are happening in the building. Lately, I have been feeling like I would like to see us have staff meetings where we are all together

more frequently than once a month, or have more collaborative teaming like seventh and eighth grade meeting together. We have a lot of common issues being that our schedules are very much alike. I don't always feel like Henry is aware of what the staff is concerned about unless we go one-on-one and just talk with him. His personality isn't such so that this is something he jumps right into. It is probably difficult for him to feel real comfortable. I think probably it would benefit us all if we were able to meet more frequently. (Vol. 3c, p. 20)

The issue of personality is raised by Celeste, and she feels that the principal's personality does not allow him to easily delve into some issues. I feel that since the principal is relatively young, and the average teacher has so many years of experience at Lakeside Middle School, these factors would make interventions by the principal difficult. Celeste feels that more frequent meetings might help the situation.

The strongest opinion about the role of the principal on the Grade 7 team is shared by Adrian. He feels that the lack of involvement by the principal is due to several key factors. The one that particularly interests me is the view that the principal's background limits his ability to help the teams. When asked about the principal's role on his team, here is Adrian's response:

I really don't know. I can tell you what a principal's role should be. I don't know if that is the role he is playing, I really don't. The principal needs to be a facilitator. He needs to know what is going on within his team; know the structures of the team; know the personalities; know how they work; give guidance; give leadership and stuff like that. I think it is very difficult for him because he came through a long process. He worked here as a student teacher. We started off here and worked as a team as a school to get there. So you are talking about almost everybody here with very few exceptions were involved in this process of getting here. I don't think it is a process he went through, so I don't think he is really, truly understands it. It is not a criticism. He works with us within that system, but I don't know if he is necessarily a believer because, you know, it is a different world. He has come out of a junior high school/high school era. Middle school is not the same concept. Although, he supports the middle school concept. I don't know if he has enough background in it to really give us the kind of leadership sometimes a principal needs to. I think we are strong enough that the team concept gives you the ability to keep going without that leadership. (Vol. 3a, pp. 4-5)

The issue of autonomy finally comes up! A group of veterans who began the teaming concept at Lakeside is led by a principal who did his student teaching at the school, and who was exposed to and involved in another system where teachers operated individually. There is the implication that if a person was not immersed in the middle school concept, that they cannot adequately understand teaming in middle schools, and thus their contributions may be limited. This is not necessarily so, and I suspect that there are several other factors which contribute to the principal's involvement in the teams. Despite the perceived shortcomings of this young principal, Adrian feels that this team is strong enough to carry on without Henry's help. Adrian continues:

We really don't need to go to him. In fact, it is almost like in reality he is probably doing what a principal would do. He is not stopping the creativity and he is also there to facilitate if we need him. I guess that he is doing the role that we really need at this point and time. It is tough when you've got a young principal, a new principal with a lot of veterans. I think that we do need a principal to take it to the next level. (Vol. 3a, p. 5)

When I inquired about what the next level will be, Adrian shared a desire to do more multi-disciplinary activities in his team. He feels that they are too individualistic in their approach.

The next level would be to go to multi-cross-curricular real middle-school stuff... Even within the teams it becomes very safe to fall back into the junior high school concept where I am the science teacher; she is the social studies teacher. I have even done up my own definition of what I do. You have to stay away from that. We teach seventh grade. Maybe that is where I am going back to leadership. Where leadership needs to come in and say you will do a multi-disciplinary unit. You will do it. We aren't. We need to get to more and more of that if you are going to continue to be a middle school. Otherwise, you need to go back to being a junior high school. You are not going anywhere. (Vol. 3a, p. 5)

There appears to be a desire to improve the situation of teaming in Grade 7. The members seem to recognize that they are static, and do not quite know how to move on.

The principal, in the opinion of some, apparently does not have the expertise, time, or the stature to bring about this change. Adrian seems to be hoping that the principal will mandate changes on the team. In my opinion, if Henry should try it, he may meet with resentment. I think that what this team is looking for in a principal, as far as teaming goes, is difficult if not impossible to find from one who may be seen as an 'outsider'.

Satisfaction

Two members on this team shared what aspects of teaming gave them the most satisfaction. Feelings of satisfaction can serve to strengthen this team. For Barbara, the special education teacher on the team, just the act of collaboration is satisfying to her. The benefits of being in the classroom with the other teachers, and learning from their approaches to teaching, are valuable to her as a special education teacher. She shares this perspective:

I feel more satisfaction in working with the teachers and meeting the needs for that particular subject matter. Also, I think the students feel better about having me there. I find that it's more helpful for everybody all the way around because the teachers in the regular classrooms know that I am aware of what they are teaching, and I'm in there when students receive their instructions. When the students come out with me afterwards to work in here I know what perspective is out there and if I need to adapt something else to work with them in here. I also have the opportunity to go back and tell the teacher this is how I revised this lesson so that they could be successful. (Vol. 3b, p. 10)

Barbara has indicated that being in the classroom and seeing how the individual teachers teach is beneficial to her when she pulls her students out for special instruction. She is able to adapt her own lessons more effectively. There is also satisfaction in being able to contribute by suggesting improvements on the lesson plans based on her experience with the special education students in her room.

For Adrian, adult interaction and getting to know the students satisfy him best.

He shares:

There are two things. I really believe that the first thing is basically being able to talk to another adult. I think that sometimes when you are in the classroom and you are working with kids all day long you lose that contact with adults. So you can literally sit down and talk with adults. I think the other part is you are working with individuals who along with you are striving for a common goal. The second thing I also believe is the fact that you really get to know kids better. In the old days I would see 150 kids a day, and it is tough to get to know 150 kids in that period of time. Now I get to really know 75 kids pretty well. At this age level you have to look after them. (Vol. 3a, p. 4)

Adult interaction is one important aspect of satisfaction when it comes to teaming for this teacher. Adrian also includes the element of caring for the students. He appears to be one teacher who has this facet of school life very high on his agenda. There is the realization that students in this stage of their physical and emotional development need extra attention and guidance.

As I did with the other teams, I asked the members of the Grade 7 team to give me a letter grade to indicate their team's performance.

Debra, who is the newest team member, gives an 'A', the highest grade. Barbara, who has been on the team for several years, gives an 'A-'; Adrian and Celeste, who have been on the team since its inception, each give a 'B', the lowest grade. I have noted that the value of the grades given seem to be in inverse proportion to the length of time on the team.

I believe that the reason for these grades is because both younger team members are experiencing this type of collaboration for the first time. Since the experience has been a positive one, they give it high marks as they do not have other experiences to compare it to. On the other hand, the team veterans with their years of experience

probably have a better sense of where they could be, and have a clearer picture of where they can improve on the team.

Another way used to describe satisfaction was the team development rubric. (See Appendix B, Tables 10, 11, 12, & 13). The results indicate that the Grade 7 team is described as being at 26.5 of 30. This description was weakest in purpose (16) and highest in involvement (18). The team description classifies them as being strong in their perception of development.

Stage in Tuckman's Model

Tuckman and Jensen formulated four stages which teams pass through in their quest to collaborate optimally. There is the forming stage, where new members are oriented to the team. Then the storming stage, where the team struggles to resolve differences in opinion and operation. The third stage is norming, where the team learns to negotiate and to operate cohesively. Stage 4 is the performing stage. This stage is marked by the ability to accomplish goals and to operate effectively as a unit.

The Grade 7 team appears to be in the norming stage. The issue of the special education students and whether these students remain in the classroom is significant for this team. This is a time of negotiation when the team is learning to negotiate and resolve differences.

Summary

The Grade 7 team appears to have the most diverse personalities of any of the teams at Lakeside Middle School. Despite these differences, this team seems able to

collaborate and function moderately well. At times, members appear to be stagnant and unable to go forward, but the presence of a new team member has strengthened this team and helped them to consider fresh perspectives. This team has a strong student focus because the teachers believe students at this stage of their development need special attention and care from teachers. Members appear to have a strong desire to provide not only a good education, but guidance to their students.

Grade 8 Team

Teaming is a lot more interesting and less lonely than teaching in your own classroom and being stuck in your own kingdom. Being a king is lonely.

--Carmen

This team is the one responsible for my decision to include all the teams in my research at Lakeside Middle School. Originally, my intention was to select two teams for research, Grades 5 and 7. One day, when out of curiosity I decided to sit in on another team meeting, it just happened to be Grade 8. The first thing that captivated me was the laughter and esprit de corps which surrounded the team. The team meeting was lively and it accomplished much. I decided then, during that meeting, that I probably needed to reconsider how many teams I would include in my research. There seemed to be so many rich experiences and relational dynamics taking place, that I was afraid to miss that valuable information. After consulting with my dissertation chair, I decided to include all the teams.

Team Overview

In terms of its composition, the Grade 8 team is the youngest team in the building. It has operated with its present configuration for only about 2 years. Despite the fact that

the members have not worked together for long, they have known each other for a long time, and work well together. Here is a synopsis of the individual members:

Ava

For the past 20 years, Ava has taught high-school students at this school district. It was only 2 years ago when she came to Lakeside that she joined the team. Ava teaches math and English literature.

Bill

Bill has an interesting background as a band and music director for the past 20 years, and a social studies teacher for the past 3 years. He has taught in this school district for 21 years. As a qualified social studies and math teacher, Bill enjoys his new role on the eighth-grade team.

Deidre

This is Deidre's first year of teaching, and she is the youngest member of the team. She graduated last May, and by the month of July was a part of the eighth-grade team. As a young teacher, she is very optimistic and positive about her experience. Because she worked in the building previously as a substitute teacher, her expectations about Lakeside School were quite realistic. Deidre's subject focus is science.

Carmen

Carmen's expertise is teaching kids with emotional impairment and learning disabilities. For all of her 24 years in education, Carmen has taught here in this school district. Seemingly always on the move, she has a passion for her students.

Team Processes

This group experiences the process of teaming in several ways. The ways include meetings, teaming format, how individuals define teaming, and how new members are dealt with.

Team Meetings

The Grade 8 team meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:00. The atmosphere at meetings is typically jovial, with lots of laughter and jokes. There is a unique chemistry on this team that enables members to get work done while having lots of fun.

In one particular meeting, Carmen shared a curriculum report she had designed. The purpose of this report was to aid in communication among the teams by focusing on what they were doing in the classroom. During the discussions about this curriculum the team commended her on her effort to reach out to other teams. However, Ava expressed concern that if the team is not careful, they will lose focus. This team wanted to reach out, but did not want to lose their identity. Not much came out of this meeting because it took place near the end of the school year. The team decided to make a greater effort to reach out to other teams for the next school year.

Teaming Format

Each of the four teams at Lakeside operates differently. I was interested in finding out what format the Grade 8 team uses in teaming. The format for this team seems quite complex. Here is a brief explanation: Carmen and Ava, when they team teach math, alternate between odd and even chapters. Carmen may teach for the first 2 days or so,

then Ava will teach for the next 2 days. When they team to teach English, they brainstorm and plan the material together. They then decide which facets of the lessons they prefer to teach, and what areas they are stronger in. This is the process which determines which portions of the English lesson they will teach. During the lesson, while one person is teaching, the other is roaming the room and assisting students.

When Bill teams with Carmen, the dynamics are different. Instead of the alternating format where the individual teachers take turns, Bill tends to do more of the teaching, while Carmen works as an aide in the background. Here is how Carmen describes it:

In Bill and my case, Bill has some very definite skills in how he conducts the class, and how he commands attention. The kids tend to like him. I take units that I'm very interested in, and I teach those units, and when I'm up in front, I will not be in English that time, and I'll teach that unit for maybe a 3 week block. But, in the other sense, when Bill is up there doing the regular day-to-day things, I work as the aide in the background, both of those are fine with me. It just depends on who you're working with and what strengths they have and how strongly they feel about the way they want to present the curriculum. (Vol. 4c, p. 24)

When Bill and Carmen team, the format is more varied and is based on individual preferences and strengths. It is interesting to note that although Carmen is a special education teacher, she operates in the classroom just like a regular teacher. There is no distinction made in her role.

I did not obtain any information on how Deidre interacts with the other teachers in the teaming process. I suspect, though, that it follows the alternating pattern similar to Ava and Carmen.

The Grade 8 team uses the combination teaming format which is a mini-interdisciplinary teaming structure. With this format, teachers from different subject

areas combine their curricular experience. A block-time approach is used to integrate curriculum and to respond to student needs.

Definitions of Teaming

The term teaming has varied definitions for different people. To get a clearer picture of how the members of the Grade 8 team define the term, I asked them for their individual definitions. Here is how teaming was defined:

Carmen: I'd define it as giving up enough of yourself so you can see what another can give you. . . . What I see is that you give up your view of your self as being the only person who has the answers, and you start to see what the other person has in the way of answers (Vol. 4c, p. 25).

Deidre: I think working together to come to some type of agreement. Gathering ideas to work together well in order to solve problems (Vol. 4d, p. 38).

Ava: Everybody's ideas hold equal weight and you sort through everybody's idea, taking bits and pieces of each one in order to come up with what you really deem to be the best solution for the problem. Or, if you're working on a project, just offering your ideas (Vol. 4a, p. 2).

Bill: Two or more people working together for a common goal. Discussing options, coming to a compromise on approaches, agreeing on the common direction to take (Vol. 4b, p. 14).

A careful look at the definitions given by the members of this team gives a picture not only of a group willing to work together, but people who are willing to "compromise" "agree," come to an "agreement," and that everyone's opinion holds "equal weight." If

this is the case, we have some indication that they will always be seeking ways to work together more effectively.

New Team Member

The Grade 8 team is relatively new in terms of its composition. However, one team member, Deidre, is experiencing her first year not only on the team but as a teacher. I wondered what her experience was with this group, and how she fit in. Here is Deidre's response:

Oh, I love the team concept. I like meeting with the eighth-grade team. We meet, once or twice a week, and we also meet the seventh-grade team whenever something comes up or somebody wants to meet. I like that kind of stuff a lot. . . . It is really a great experience. . . . Carmen helped me adjust very well. And they're all very open to me and very welcoming. Bill, Carmen, and Ava, all three of them, have been great. They give me ideas. I can go talk to them about discipline problems or classroom management which is nice for my first year. And they usually give me really good advice. And it's not just one option that I can choose. They give me, you know, like three or four different ideas. During the first meeting I may have felt uncomfortable and unsure, but by the end of the meeting I felt pretty welcomed in the group actually. (Vol. 4d, pp. 31-32)

Deidre has positive feelings about her experience as a new team member. Some of the other members of her team also share her perspective. Carmen says, "Deidre is brand new this year, but she is a wonderful addition to our team. Just a wonderful addition" (Vol. 4c, p. 29). Ava feels similarly, she says:

With the team that we had before, we had personalities that the team wasn't cohesive with, as it is this year. This year we have energy, you have a new person coming in who has new ideas, a very strong person, very comfortable, very knowledgeable in their area, but also real willing to lend ideas. She doesn't just sit back and say, okay, show me how you work. Immediately she just jumped right in. (Vol. 4a, p. 9)

It is obvious that Ava appreciates the contributions which Deidre offers the team, and there is a healthy respect for her talents even though she is new and is a first-year

teacher. This type of attitude lends to a collaborative and constructive atmosphere on the team. Where might this attitude have developed? Is it possible that previous experiences may have contributed to this view of teaming?

Previous Teaming Experiences

During my interview, I asked about previous experiences in teaming. I discovered that for all the persons involved, this group was their first experience with the teaming concept. When asked about teaming in the past, Bill the former band teacher, replied:

When I was band director, I was on my own. I was strictly my own person and really collaborated with no one other than to make contact to arrange for kids coming out of class, or that type of thing. So teaming wise it has just been these last 3 years. I've always enjoyed working with other people in a teaming type of situation, so I wasn't real concerned about that. I felt very natural, walked right into it, fell right into it naturally. (Vol. 4b, p. 12)

For Carmen, the special education teacher, entering into a teaming situation was not as smooth or pleasant. She recalls:

For 20 years I had a pull-out program where I took special ed kids from, initially fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth, and then seventh and eighth, and then just eighth. And I would take them out of their regular class, and would supplant their learning in the special ed room. So to some degree, that was teaming, even though it wasn't called teaming then. And I had my own room, and a space where I could have kids in and I think the strength of that was that it gave them a place to feel as if they belonged, and a place where they identified with someone who was teaching them at their level. Then we finally got to the point where we made the commitment to team. And at that point in time, I really got cold feet, because what that meant for me was losing that real safety of having that room where I control things and I decided how it went, and it was a total staff consensus, and so we went with it. We had a real stormy team that year, and a lot of trouble with controlling, and whose way was going to be the way we took. Everything took a lot of time to decide. We had some staff changes, so the team changed a little bit, and it was more comfortable, but I think it's a combination of things. I think one was personalities, and the other was experience with teaming, so that each year it has been more and more comfortable to team, it seems more and more natural. But each year we've had staff changes until this last 2 years where we've been together twice, the same people, and that is a real strengthening. (Vol. 4c, p. 22)

The Grade 8 team had a rocky start, but things seemed to have improved as the team matured, and the members changed. For Ava, the teaming experience has been more positive. Though she came in while the team was in transition, she always felt a part of the group. She shares:

This was my first experience with a team at all. At the high school you have to share people for the different departments, but there isn't teaming per se--the schedule doesn't allow for it. When I came here for the first time, it was overwhelming. It was absolutely phenomenal. I never realized--never seen--a group of people work so closely together for the good of a child. It's a real energizing situation, everybody helps everybody else, and it just works real well...The team wasn't real solid because they'd had people moving in and out of the team for the past 2 years, so it really--the concept was solid, but as far as ever feeling like I wasn't part--that wasn't ever the case. You know, the job was intimidating, because I was changing levels. After so many years of being a high-school teacher, that was real apprehensive. But from day 1 it was just a real positive situation, and I took their lead, but they never made you feel that because this concept had been established that you weren't an integral part of the team. (Vol. 4a, p. 2)

The initial teaming experiences of the Grade 8 team are varied and unique. Despite the variance, it appears that the positive atmosphere prevalent in the group, and the individual's personal attitude are what determines the cohesiveness of the team.

Roles on the Team

Like the other teams at Lakeside Middle School, the Grade 8 team does not have a formal leader or person in charge of the team. With this being the case, I was curious as to what roles individuals play on this team, and who is considered the leader of the group.

Carmen sees herself as playing two roles in the group. The first is her ability to generate ideas and make connections, and the next is her humor. Carmen shares her perspective:

I'm kind of an idea person. And I make a lot of connections. My strength in teaching has always been that I can see connections between everything so that if we have a

math lesson, it's very easy for me to take following directions and help the kids apply it to their everyday life outside of school and their life inside of school. So when we have a project going on in our team, I can see where we can maximize it by going here and there and the other place and making these connections together, and that I think is what I add to the team. Plus humor, our team runs a lot on humor, and so the laughter and the insights about kids, not in a bad way, not laughing at the kids, but at our situation sometimes. I think we all add to that, but that's another thing that I add to the team. (Vol. 4c, p. 25)

For Deidre, she sees herself in a learning mode. As a new teacher, observation is the best way she feels she can contribute to the group. At times, she does share ideas, but she prefers to watch and learn. Deidre shares:

I stay in the shadows. I do say things and come up with ideas and stuff but it's my first year, and I'm trying to learn. I've learned that the best way to do that is to listen and kind of watch and see how things go. That's how it works for me. I tried some ideas and stuff, they've really made me feel like part of the group so I've come out a lot more since the beginning of the year. (Vol. 4d, pp. 35-36)

From Bill's perspective, he contrasts his role with that of Carmen and Ava. They tend to generate the ideas in the group, and he analyzes those ideas and keeps the discussions on track. He also affirms Deidre's statement about her role as observer and learner. Bill shares:

I think Carmen and Ava tend to be the two who start the talking process. Deidre, being new, this is her first year teaching, she tends to kinda sit back and watch and not be as jumping in kinda of thing. I usually will sit at the beginning of the meeting, listening to what Carmen and Ava are talking about, unless I had something specific on my agenda. If I have something specific, then I'm right there, you know, we need to talk about this. And then I would listen to what they would have to say, and then I think I would tend to be the person to come in and start taking a look at the pros and cons of both sides and to keep the conversation/discussion rolling in that direction. That's one of my strong points, I am extremely analytical. (Vol. 4b, p. 16)

In the discussion of team roles, the idea of who plays the role of team leader came up. Ava thinks that Carmen plays that role because she has been on the team for the longest time. Both Ava and Deidre agree that if anyone plays that role, it is Carmen.

Although the Grade 8 team does not have a designated leader or individual formal assignments, each person does play a particular role. Members of the team tend to agree that their roles are complementary, and the structure works well.

The Principal's Role

The previous teams that we have looked at, appreciated the role of the principal in terms of giving them autonomy. The Grade 8 team is no exception. Some members of the team see themselves in the role of being the principal's helper. They think that a part of their responsibility is to make his job easier. This team appears to need the principal's help less, and therefore wish to give him more help.

When asked about the principal's role, among other things, Bill believes they should keep him informed. Here is Bill's perspective:

In our group I think he tends to be an advisor, an observer. I would call him an advisor to the group. . . . He just stays in touch with what we are doing, and then of course we share what we're up to at that particular point, where we've been, where we are, where we want to go. We then seek out his input as far as how he sees things. The principal has got to be aware of everything that's going at the school, and that's one of our responsibilities as a team to make sure that he knows what we're doing so he doesn't get caught by surprise somewhere along the line. (Vol. 4b, p. 15)

Deidre appreciates the supportive aspect of the principal's role. Though he is not often present in meetings, he stands behind them. Deidre shares:

Well, Henry really hasn't sat in on too many of our meetings, but I know he's always very supportive of us. And whatever we decide to do, he will stand behind us which is really nice because any ideas we have or changes we'd like to make as a team, he stands behind us. (Vol. 4d, p. 34)

Carmen in her remarks introduces the concept of autonomy. She makes reference to the history of the teaming concept at Lakeside, and that the principal probably has to go

through some of the mental struggles that she did in the process of accepting teaming.

Carmen shares:

We grew up in this, and we faced our battles as we were coming along. Henry's been tossed in the center. He didn't come from a situation where collaboration in this form was practiced, and so, for him, I think it's a challenge, the same thing that we had to go through. I have taught this program called success instrumental enrichment, and it's a program that teaches kids how to think. It has them look at the way that they process. It is called Reducing Your Egocentricity, and I love it, because that's exactly what has to happen. You have to reduce your tendency to look at yourself as the center of the world, and allow yourself to look at what other people are doing. And for Henry, I think his role is to facilitate us, to allow us to be a team, and to trust us. Those three things. (Vol. 4c, p. 26)

Carmen also believes that the team's responsibility is to make the principal's job easier. She expresses some reservation, however, about the principal's perception of this role. Carmen shares:

I think we should be making his job easier. I don't know if that's how he perceives it. On the other hand, when you are asked something, or confronted, by one person, you're confronted by a team. So whether or not it is perceived as being easier or not, I don't know. . . . The most lonely job in the building is being principal. The principal is the only person not teaming. So, he could feel very put upon, I think. You'd have to ask him that question. (Vol. 4c, p. 27)

Like other members of the team, Ava sees the principal as a facilitator, but quickly asserts the team's autonomy and the fact that they operate freely. She also agrees with Bill and Carmen that they are responsible for helping the principal to take up the slack when problems arise. Ava Shares:

I see him as a person that works with us. He doesn't necessarily direct us. So you don't have the principal up here, and then down below is the team. We like to think of us as helping him in situations. We had this instance where the kids were wearing chains and he tried to do some things. Finally as a team, we just said, the kids are not going to be wearing chains to school because they're too much of a distraction. We went to him and said what our decision was. We wanted to help him and to take up some of the slack This is a decision that we've made. We will stand behind him, and if there are any complaints, we want him to know that we're going to deal with them so that he doesn't have to. (Vol. 4a, p. 3)

The Grade 8 team is confident in their role as facilitators and helpers for the principal. There is another facet to Ava's perception though. Ava feels that their team culture is so strong that she feels sympathy for the principal, who is new, and has to deal with this 'force'. Ava shares:

Especially since he's new, I often wonder, if that's kind of unsettling, like you have this force to be reckoned with, and it's not like there isn't respect there, but because they're used to operating and kind of know what's good, you have kind of a mis-balance I think he's fortunate to have teachers who are willing to not only support him, but also to deal with certain issues so that he doesn't necessarily have to. (Vol. 4a, pp. 3-4)

Ava and Carmen wonder about how the principal feels operating with such an independent group. Ava answers her own question and concludes by saying, "From the 'boss' standpoint, he seems to deal with it pretty well."

Where did this culture of autonomy within the teams originate? It is possible that the previous principal was responsible, and he did it purposely. Carmen explains:

When we first started, I think the former principal's role was that he had to force us to take over responsibilities as a group and to get used to making changes for the students that we taught. We tended to be in the same mode where you take your worst behaving students, you send them down to the office, and you expect the principal to handle them. But our principal would not do that. He would just talk to the kid, yes, but he'd turn them around and send them back to class. And that made him, pretty much, not a popular guy. As we evolved, we got very used to doing that so that we would recognize the problem. So we then put a plan into action. (Vol. 4c, p. 26)

The previous principal did much to foster an independent spirit within the teams. There is now a strong desire within this team to operate autonomously. The teachers appreciate the principal's role as a facilitator or advisor, but they feel fully capable of handling their own affairs.

Team Strengths and Weaknesses

I was interested in finding out the perceptions of the team in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. The respondents were generally in agreement that their relational skills were what accounted for their development. In this section, I first focus on the team strengths, then the weaknesses. Here are the responses I received:

Deidre, the newest member of the team, when asked about the team's strength replied: "Probably that we all get along so well. I think we're all very open and flexible and that helps a lot" (Vol. 4d, p. 35).

Carmen agrees with Deidre's position; she states:

This team has been together 2 years, and our personalities gel and we're really willing to let loose of things. That's the key to me; how willing you are to let loose of your own idea and to see it in another way. And this team is very good at that. We don't have any idea so firmly implanted that you're going to take it personally if it's not chosen. That seems to be what made our team work out, is that things are decided relatively quickly because everybody is willing to say, "You got a great idea." or, "Let's try it your way, if it doesn't work, we'll come back to the way I was thinking of it." And it's just real fluid that way. You get a lot more done. (Vol. 4c, p. 23)

This willingness to be open to the ideas of others on the team and not always wanting your idea to take precedence seems to be an important ingredient in this team's development. Bill also agrees with this perspective:

We do get along very well. We communicate well, we work together well. There's really nobody in my team that's so bull-headed, that they won't listen to someone else. We're very flexible with each other, and I think every person in that team would stand up for something I strongly believe in. I think every person is like that and I think we all respect each other for that. But we also know that we each have a lot to contribute, and so we listen to each other and we really mold our different ideas into one idea that comes out of the group. (Vol. 4b, p. 15)

A consistent message of flexibility and communication exists within this team.

Ava, though, has a slightly different perspective on the team's strength. Though her

position is not in conflict with that of the others on her team, the focus is different. Ava says:

Academically, they're top notch. They know their field. They can problem-solve really, really well. And there's a compassion there. It's never a situation where you just are here on a day-to-day basis to do your job and you leave. It's really part of your life, and I think they all do, they just have such strengths in all those areas. Really compassionate. (Vol. 4a, p. 4)

Ava's focus on the strength of her team lies in the areas of academics, problem-solving, compassion, and commitment. She sees all of these ingredients coming together to shape the team. Ava's focus may be based on her personal preference.

The members of the Grade 8 team are all in agreement that they have a strong team, and the reason for this lies largely with their ability to work well together. So strong is their belief in the team's strengths that when asked about the weaknesses, they could not seem to find any.

Deidre responded, "No. I can honestly say no. I've worked in a lot of group settings before, and there's always been one problem or another, but not on this team. It's pretty unique" (Vol. 4d, p. 35).

Carmen at least tried to think of some weakness in the team, but was unsuccessful. She said:

Well, I see some strengths in being able to work as a group, and work for, we all have kids at heart, and so that is a strength. I would really like to give you a weakness, at least something that I think we do less well, but I feel real positive about this group and so it's hard for me to come with something that. I think the people are skilled in their jobs, they know their areas, they're willing to learn, they're willing to share, and so I don't see a whole lot of weaknesses right now. (Vol. 4c, p. 28)

Carmen struggles to identify weaknesses in her team. She is successful only in

sharing additional strengths, some of which echoes Ava's perspectives, but she is unable to list at least one weakness.

Bill is in no better position to give any information on weaknesses. He too is at a loss for words. He shares:

Right now, I'm just really pleased with the way the team works. I'm sure there is, but I can't think of anything right now. I'm sure there's--even to the point of when we meet, you know, first thing in the morning is the perfect time because we start the day at that time and you know what's happening. So I'm sure there's something that would help, but right now I can't think of anything. (Vol. 4b, p. 15)

For Ava, the task is no easier. She is only able to share a way in which the team can possibly improve academics for students who are going into high school, but as far as the dynamics within the team, she can see no weaknesses.

I think that we would really like to be aware of and have taken steps to find out what curriculum is being offered at the different grade levels, high school, etc. So that we can have more coordination, and that's something that we're working towards. Knowing what they're teaching in high school and how can we best serve our kids with that in mind. But really, right now, from the team standpoint, I can't-- I'm sure it's not utopia, but it's just a real effective group. (Vol. 4a, p. 5)

There is unanimity among the Grade 8 team members about the effectiveness of the group, and the fact that they work well together. Though members of the group agree that there must be weaknesses, they were unable to identify them.

Team to Team

The Grade 8 team concurs with the previous teams that there is not adequate interactions between teams. Deidre relates that the eighth-grade team does interact some with the seventh-grade team. However, there was practically no interaction between her team and the other teams in the building. Deidre says:

I know we've worked a couple times with the seventh-grade team, and I don't know if

it's because we get the seventh graders next year or how that works, and so we discuss a lot together. But we've never met with the sixth- or fifth-grade teachers at all in a team setting. And I don't know really why that is. Maybe we don't need to and staff meetings are enough. I'm not sure, I couldn't answer that one. (Vol. 4d, p. 38)

Ava agrees with Deidre about the team interactions. Though there are infrequent meetings with the Grade 7 team, the interactions are limited. Ava says:

We don't cooperate a lot with fifth and sixth grade, but with seventh grade, we meet with them once a month and we discuss things that we are doing--and there's just an awareness there. We're not so much "working together" except for the one project, but just an awareness at the school. (Vol. 4a, p. 5)

Bill also agrees that team interactions are limited. The limited interactions with the seventh-grade team are attributed to a convenient time schedule. Bill says:

Now the one thing that we don't have here is a lot of opportunity to share with the other teams. We do meet on a monthly basis with the seventh-grade team because we have the same time available, but I have really no idea what the fifth-grade or the sixth-grade team is doing, and there is literally no communication there. And that would probably be one of the biggest drawbacks as far as what we have currently. (Vol. 4b, p. 20)

There is wide agreement in this team, as well as the previous ones, that the interactions between the various teams are very limited and in some cases nonexistent. There seems to be a bit more contact between the seventh and eighth grades, but this too is limited.

Satisfaction

During my study, I was interested in finding out what aspect of collaboration gives members of this team the most satisfaction. I also wanted to find a way to describe their satisfaction. During my interviews, I posed the question, and the responses were quite similar. Among the reasons mentioned, collaboration for the purpose of solving problems and helping the students stood out. Here is Bill's response:

I think being able to just share ideas with fellow professionals. Hearing their thoughts and ideas on either things that are going on or new things or ideas. And then the same thing, if I have an idea of something I would like to try, of talking it over first, bouncing off, getting some reaction. So I think just that idea of interaction with fellow professionals for the goal of why we're here, you know, for the kids. (Vol. 4b, p. 13)

As a new teacher, Deidre appreciates the support structure of collaborating for the purpose of helping students. Also, she feels a certain comfort in knowing that some problems she faces are not unique to her. She shares:

Well, I like knowing what's going on with all the teachers, and I like to be able to discuss certain students and problems students may be having. It's nice to know where the kids are at in all their classes instead of just mine. Usually, if I feel like a certain student's having difficulty when I go and talk with Bill or Ava or Cathy or when we're in one of our meetings discussing it. Seems like everyone's experiencing the same thing. So it's kind of nice. You know, I don't feel so left out there and like a fish out of water. (Vol. 4d, p. 33)

Ava's focus is also on the students. Her satisfaction comes from collaborating with her team, along with parents and the principal to solve students' problems.

When you see a project comes off and it just really, really, comes off perfectly, and it's something that everybody's working on together. But I think more often than not when you have a student that has real definite problems and we have "We care" meetings which is where the principle comes in, the parent comes in, and the child comes in, and we let them know that we want them to be successful, we're here that they can be successful, and then to see the child turn around. That's the best. (Vol. 4a, p. 3)

Carmen also appreciates having some help in dealing with problems which may arise in the classroom. She also appreciates that the talents of her colleagues complement her areas of weakness. Carmen states:

Not being alone to solve the problems. Having the collaboration to solve student problems, administrative problems, and time problems. I'm a great idea person, and I'm great at doing projects, in my own time, but I'm not a scheduled person. I can fall down when it comes to being on time or remembering that we have a certain day coming up where there's going to be a class change. Ava is very strong in that, Bill's very strong in that, and Carrie's strong in it, so I have three people with me who take

up the other side of me that I don't really care to develop that much, and I can be free to look at the creative side and bring that to the team. We tend to come together, and make up for each other's weaknesses, and use each other's strengths. And that's an important thing with this team. (Vol. 4c, p. 24)

For the Grade 8 team, satisfaction centers on it's ability to problem-solve, especially on student issues. There is the issue of security for Deidre as a new teacher, and for the other team members being able to complement each other and share ideas as professionals. Among the various aspects of teaming which bring this team satisfaction, the welfare of the student is uppermost.

Members of the Grade 8 team were asked to assign a letter grade to their team based on how they thought the team performed collaboratively. This was also used as another way to describe satisfaction. The previous section on team strengths and weaknesses gives some indication of what these grades maybe. Every member of the Grade 8 team gave the team an A.

A team development rubric (see Appendix B, Tables 10, 11, 12 & 13) was used to describe the perceptions of teaming on the Grade 8 team. The results of the comparisons for the team indicate that the team members have portrayed themselves as 28 of 30. This classifies them as being very strong in their perception of teaming. There were two areas, purpose and process, where the team was lower (16 & 16). The group portrayed themselves highest in the areas of communication, involvement, commitment, and trust.

Two outside sources were used to corroborate the perceptions of the teams. The school counselor portrayed the Grade 8 team at 26.5, and the media specialist portrayed the team at 25. All of the portrayals given indicate that this team appears to be strong.

Both outside sources have corroborated the team's perception of satisfaction. I have concluded, therefore, that satisfaction on this team is high.

Stage in Tuckman's Model

The Grade 8 team appears to have reached the performing stage of Tuckman's model of team development. The major characteristic of this stage is cohesive teamwork. The team members seem to have learned how to function as a unit, and their energies are pooled to produce positive results. There is appreciation and respect among team members, and they have learned how to solve problems and resolve differences.

There appears to be real respect and a sense of camaraderie on this team. Despite the fact that the team has not had this composition of members for a long time, the combination of personalities and the fact that the members have known each other for a long time possibly contribute to the group's positive attitude and development.

Summary

The Grade 8 team appears to be the group at Lakeside which teams best. The members of this team get along well together, and are clear on what their goals are and how they want to accomplish them. The team is quite new in terms of its composition, and have made remarkable progress toward optimum teaming.

This team is very confident in its abilities. I was amazed at how well the members approached their tasks and helped each other to deal with difficult situations. The Grade 8 team sets the standard for teaming at Lakeside Middle School.

CHAPTER 5

THE ENCORE TEAM

We have no common planning time. We have no sense of identity. We have basically been relegated to second-class citizens. --Carl

Introduction

The encore team in this study is defined as teachers who teach subjects such as band, physical education, shop, art, and other subjects that are not part of the traditional core curriculum. Though they are formally referred to as a team, they do not meet regularly, and collaboration among them is minimal or non-existent.

My 'discovery' and subsequent decision to interview the encore teachers appeared to be serendipitous. One day, I was having an informal chat with the school counselor after he enquired about how my study was going. In the course of our conversation I explained how I had decided to expand my study to include all four teams in the building, instead of just the two which I originally planned.

The counselor asked if I had any plans to interview the encore teachers. I said no, and he replied that I probably should. My decision to include these teachers in my study has enriched my findings, and given me a new perspective on Lakeside Middle School.

My interviews with this group were quite unstructured and spontaneous. I sensed

that they had a lot to say and decided to allow them to determine the direction of the interviews.

I am amazed that for the years I have been at Lakeside Middle School, I have never sensed the rift that exists between the core and encore teachers. My first surprise came when these teachers seemed very willing to talk about the issue of being left out of the team planning time. Some were willing to grant an interview on the same day I contacted them. I soon discovered the reason for the teachers' willingness to talk.

Industrial Arts

My first interview was with Carl, the Industrial Arts teacher. I had subbed for him on several occasions, and discovered that he was very oriented to the outdoors. He certainly looked like he had spent a lot of time outdoors, with his deep tan, bushy moustache, rugged build, and multiple photographs of his family on boating trips hanging in his office. He always left good plans for me to follow, and was careful about me not allowing the kids to use power tools in his absence. Carl had been teaching for 24 years; he has taught at Lakeside for 21 years.

I was always puzzled about his teaching schedule. He had to leave the middle school and go to the district high school to complete the rest of the day. How did he cope with such a schedule? With which school was his loyalty? The answers were soon to come during my interview.

There was a tension in the air when I entered his office for the interview. He kindly offered me a seat. He was ready to begin even before my tape recorder was, and I somehow felt more like a counselor about to be dumped on than a graduate student doing

research. As I faced this teacher, he seemed to be like an overinflated balloon ready to pop. His words came out described but full of emotion. Here was an opportunity for him to tell his story.

This was his first response to my question about his background: "This is my 24th year teaching. I consider myself a seasoned veteran. I have a Master's degree in Education. I have been teaching at Lakeside for 21 years" (Vol. 5c, p. 5).

This teacher appeared anxious to affirm his validity as a real and serious educator; he needed to establish that his position and the perception of it in no way diminish his academic capabilities. The issue of vocational teachers being at odds with academic or core teachers over perceptions about their scholastic competence might well be an issue here.

At the end of his emotional answer to my first question, the real crux of his encore gripe became apparent. He continued:

I was with the original group who went through and brought Carmen Hunt on board and she was the one who was at that time considered the middle school guru. She had a bunch of different ideas. We were thinking about doing a teaming thing and we came up with different proposals and quite a bit of research. We ended up with something different from what we planned. (Vol. 5c, p. 5)

Carl was clearly upset that despite all the planning and promises of the possibility of interdisciplinary teaming, things did not work out. He did mention, however, that during the first year there was a good effort made.

The first year we were here we did a couple of projects, one with a group of seventh graders. We built a boat, and that was our first year that we were actually working as a team. The team interaction within that team was very weak. We were just getting started though. A lot of stuff I did here but we didn't have the interaction between myself and the math people at that time. I hoped to bring in more of the science people. That didn't happen either. As of right now the boat that we built as far as I can tell has never been used for any of the stuff that we originally talked about. A lot

of the other things, even in the social sciences, we didn't tie it together. It was a good first attempt, but we didn't tie it together. (Vol. 5, p. 5)

That first year appeared promising. There seemed to be the possibility that the core teachers could integrate their subject areas with Carl's woodwork class and projects could be attempted which would help the students connect academics with the practicalities of life. Although the first attempt seemed promising, things did not work out. When Carl's schedule changed, he was unable to continue his attempt to team with the core teachers.

When I asked Carl to tell me about the relationship between the core and encore teachers, here is what he shared:

We have no common planning time. We have no sense of identity. We have basically been relegated to second-class citizens. I guess that is one of the problems I find with the program the way we have it set up right now. . . . Some of us have been, for lack of a better word, "sacrificed". . . . We have known each other and interacted for a long time. Which is for a lack of a better word 'a family' where you have some brothers and sisters you always see eye to eye with, and some other ones where there is some conflict with at different times. That is human nature and we all understand that. I do feel as though we have been relegated to a filler position. Where the other people are teaming there are still a lot of things that could happen. The number of times I have seen people in the area come down and said 'Mike, have you thought about doing this? Maybe we can integrate this into our project.' It has never happened. (Vol. 5c, pp. 6-7)

Mike uses the sibling metaphor to describe the relationship between core and encore teachers. He seems to feel that although they are part of the same family, there is tension and conflict among some of them. I asked Mike what he would like to see happen among the teams, and he did not hesitate in his answer.

I would like to see the programs integrated much more than they are. I guess to be honest with you I think we have a lot of things to offer each other. Go back to the math thing. There is so much carry over, so much hands-on stuff that we can go through and do and take that out of the classroom and do it somewhere else. I think

that is something we could do. The whole area is there. It doesn't happen. It could. (Vol. 5c, p. 7)

Since the possibility for collaboration among the core and encore teams exists, I wondered how Mike feels about the future. Did he think that there is a possibility that things could change? His answer was blunt and direct:

In my honest opinion, no. We have our schedules set up like this for the benefit of the academic teachers and I don't know how you can rearrange that. Well, I am sure we could rearrange that, it's that I don't hear that idea coming from anybody else. . . . When you have four or five people for lack of a better word the 'encore people'. I almost find that term degrading anyway. It is like an extra. You have these few people versus 17 or 18 people who are very happy with the schedule. What really happens? I do believe we have a lot of good things that are happening. I think by tweaking and doing other stuff you can make it better than what it is. Are we getting complacent? This teaming idea is great. Not for some of us. (Vol. 5c, p. 7)

In conclusion, Mike feels that his interests are divided between the middle school and the high school. This unfortunate schedule has made it more difficult to collaborate. Being in a small school district has posed some problems which are not easy to solve. The flexibility which is so critical for teaming is not easy to attain. Mike feels, however, that the lines of communication can be improved and more information shared between core and encore teachers. For him, any type of overture, even if it is to just share information, would be a step in the right direction.

Physical Education

My second interview with members of the encore team was with Aaron and Beverly, a husband and wife who taught P.E. He was responsible for the boys, and she for the girls. Aaron has been at Lakeside for 30 years, and Beverly for 25. I met with them in Aaron's office which was located in what seemed to be the most inaccessible portion of the school. Just being there made you feel cut off from the rest of the building

and its activities. I noted that this location did not do much to help these encore teachers feel like a part of the rest of the school. The two informants were not happy. Their faces were as ominous as a threatening thunderstorm, and I began to wonder what I had gotten myself into. What was the feeling regarding teaming? Beverly spoke first:

I am all for the team collaboration and that effort that is made in the middle school. I think it is really important that everyone is aware of what everyone else is doing. Everybody has a common goal that they are working toward. However, I don't like the time schedule that we have been given for students so that core teachers can have a common hour and a half time period every day. The sacrifice of good curriculum and good scheduling has been thrown out the window so that core teachers can meet together for an hour and a half every day. For me the sacrifice should be made in the other direction. Curriculum should come first. Beyond that you have subbed here and you know, and I don't know what your opinion is of 90-minute PE classes every single day. I think that is absolutely ludicrous. (Vol. 5b, p. 1)

The issue of scheduling again comes up with encore teachers. This time, however, the angle is a bit different. The major concern is not so much the isolation from the core teachers and the lack of opportunity to team with them. The major concern is that while the core teachers have one and one half hours to meet and plan, the encore teachers have to deal with the students for 90 minutes. They feel that this block of time is too long to keep students in some classes. Beverly continues:

It is so far from the realm of what we as physical educators believe to be a good program for kids. I am all for every student in this school having PE on a daily basis, but not for 90 minutes. We have a very high percentage in this school of special education students that have needs. We have kids that are in the gym for 90 minutes every day. If they are not in the gym for 90 minutes every day they are in art for 90 minutes every day. I have nothing against art. I think art is wonderful and I think it is something basic to all our needs, but 90 minutes is just poor scheduling. The kids don't like it. I don't like it. I think there is a better way of going about it and making curriculum your priority. (Vol. 5b, p. 1)

Beverly feels that having a block scheduling format may be convenient for the core teachers, since it gives them adequate planning and teaming time. However, it is

inconvenient for the encore teachers who have to occupy the kids during this time. The 90 minute block of time is too long to engage students in planned physical activity.

Aaron is concerned too about the scheduling issue. He shares what he would like to see done about it:

I would like to see shorter classes. More compact, get them in, and get them out. Do our activity, whatever we have planned. You have every kid boy and girl in this school have an opportunity of phys. ed. every single day. It could be done. Like she alluded to that the fact that there is a common planning time they would like all these core teachers to have. Sometimes, we feel that it is more or less we are fill. We are filling space. It used to be, before I won in arbitration, they sent every eighth grader down here at one time. Then I had 43 boys, Beverly had 37 girls. We almost had 80 kids in this gym. (Vol. 5a, p. 2)

Class size also became an issue with these teachers. There were too many students under their care for too long. Aaron later pointed out that of the 43 boys 13 were special education students, and the dynamics of time and the number of students in the class caused behavioral problems.

Aaron's anger was fueled by the fact that he felt the administration at that time was not sympathetic with his wishes. It took a long time to get the problem resolved. Getting an arbitrator to rule in his favor was what changed the situation. He continued:

It was quite an ordeal and it took me a year and a half to get it changed. It was only changed because an arbitrator ruled in my favor. Now if he hadn't ruled in my favor I would still be dealing with that very same problem. In fact, my building principal, not Henry but before that, told me if they wanted to they could send every seventh and eighth grader down here because this is considered large-group instruction. It didn't make any difference to them whether it was 40, 80, or 140. It left a sour taste in my mouth. Felt like you were up against it all by yourself. (Vol. 5a, p. 3)

Aaron and Beverly feel that the problems of class size and the length of the class period could be resolved by hiring an extra PE teacher. They believed, however, that it is unlikely to happen. Unlike other encore teachers who are most concerned about the lack

of opportunity to collaborate with the core teachers, this group's concern is about how the schedule affects class size.

Art

Unlike other encore teachers who began with concerns and complaints, Doris began with reminiscing about previous teaming experiences. She has taught at Lakeside for 18 years and has previously taught language arts and social studies. Doris remembers the days before the 90-minute class periods. She relates:

Before we went to block scheduling, three of us were able to meet. You know, we had a common meeting time so we would get together and do some of this planning at that time too! We enjoyed it and the kids enjoyed it . . . because we all began seeing the connections and it was fun being able to have that bouncing back and forth. We all had different styles and we learned from each other. (Vol. 5d, pp. 11-12)

An additional benefit of the teaming at that time was the connections in the curriculum that were made in the students' minds. Doris continued:

One day I was in this art room standing, and this student came in and looked at me and said, "Doris, have all of you been talking to each other?" Of course I thought I knew what he was talking about, but I played dumb and said, what are you talking about? He said, "In social studies we are studying Ancient Greece. In art class we have been studying Ancient Greek temples. In language arts we are doing the gods and goddesses." Of course he saw the connection and he was accusing me of talking to my colleagues. Now we enjoy the stories, but that was exactly what we were after. Other kids came in hearing the conversation and also became real concerned that teachers were talking to each other. It was wonderful. (Vol. 5d, pp. 11-12)

Certainly these teachers had a good thing going. Their collaboration enabled students to make connections in the classroom. The teachers obviously enjoyed the collegial relationships and making plans for more collaboration. All of this was soon to end, unfortunately. With some sadness in her voice, Doris went on:

The team evolved out of a common need to work together, and ironically, when we went to block scheduling, I was scheduled out. I needed the encore team. The way it

is structured in this district, art has not been integrated into the core curriculum. Now this is the part where I see a flaw, a problem if you will. (Vol. 5d, p. 12)

There were schools that found ways to integrate art and other encore subjects into the core curriculum. Doris began to relate the various conferences and workshops she attended which suggested how this might be done.

I know in other areas and other districts that art and other areas that are not reading, writing, and arithmetic have been integrated into the curriculum. We had a successful integration of the arts, but because of scheduling and relief time we have never addressed that issue as a district or as a building. Indianapolis has an integrated curriculum and the arts are integrated in. There was one from D.C. and one in Milwaukee. They were exemplary schools. Kind of like how Benton Harbor has its arts magnet school where the arts are integrated into the curriculum. This is nationwide and it was just an absolutely fantastic seminar. I came back with all these different ways these principles were able to work. They integrate, absolutely. (Vol. 5d, p. 12)

There is no doubt in Doris's mind that there can be a successful integration of the arts into the curriculum, and there can be more collaboration between teachers. Here is her suggestion:

Sometimes we would get them all together in one room and we would talk about whatever topic it was from all our different points of view. In some of those schools the teachers were relieved like we are, but it was planned that on Tuesdays there would be a substitute in the building the whole day and then that meant the art teacher that day would be covered. And then the music teacher would be covered, and then you know that sometime during the day it would be like a checkerboard, you would have to make plans so that each team is meeting with each art group. It was fun to do that, and I guess I wished that we would come that way. (Vol. 5d, p. 13)

The solution to the scheduling problem, according to Doris, is to have substitute teachers periodically relieve the encore teachers so that they could meet to plan and collaborate. The idea certainly sounds good, but I wondered how this will affect the school's budget.

As the interview progressed, it was apparent that this teacher really enjoyed

working with other teachers to integrate curriculum. When I mentioned my observation of her love for teaming, she had in interesting response:

It is wonderful. I have been teaching for I don't know how many years now. But I am getting used to being isolated again. It is frustrating getting used to it. The first couple of years it was really difficult and now sometimes I even get a little frustrated because we don't have the benefit of what we had before. How can you make it a little more meaningful? Well, there is only so much one person can do given the isolation vs. the teaming. It was stimulating to me as a professional. It was challenging. I had to grow. That stimulation that you feel as an adult as a leader is going to rub off with the kids. . . . Again, it is not a matter of being angry. It is just a matter of having enjoyed something and missing it. (Vol. 5d, pp. 14-15)

Unlike other encore team members who have expressed anger over their situation of not teaming with the core teachers, Doris's emotion appears to be sadness. She kept making references to what was done in the past and what she had seen others do. She appreciates the support that the principal gives, but agrees that scheduling is the major problem.

As I concluded the interview I asked her if she thought things might improve in the future. She was uncertain that things will change. She responded:

I don't know. I think that one of the things is again the lack of common planning time. I think there are some folks that would be more inclined and some less inclined just like any group situation where we could do some integration. But the lack of working time where you can sit down and look at those commonalties set up those things is a real problem. . . . I know it would take extra effort. . . . People have said to me 'I know when you guys were doing this.' I have had other people say to me "We should get together on this." 'Yes let's do that.' It seems to stop there for whatever reason.... It is not a personal thing. It is the practical. We were talking today about how many people are on committees after school. Technology Today and Escrow G are two, one on campus and one off campus overlapping. Another meeting for this building on career day that we are planning and then on Wednesday another Technology Meeting. So there are three after school with four meetings. (Vol. 5d, p. 18)

Like other educators, the ones at Lakeside face the problem of adequate time to accomplish all that they want to. Doris believes that scheduling is a big part of the reason

why encore teachers are not involved in teaming. She also sees time as a factor. With so many meetings to attend, especially after school, it is unlikely that many teachers will want to add more to what they already have to do.

Doris tries to keep up with what is happening in the other grades and rooms despite her isolation. The flexibility of her lunch hour enables her to at least sit in on conversations in the faculty lounge and to get a feel for what is happening. This attitude of reaching out appears to help her stay in touch, and break some of the isolation. Doris is not the only encore teacher who is trying to reach out despite the isolation, Earl, the Band Teacher, has a similar philosophy.

Band

Earl is the newest member of the encore team. When Bill, now a member of the Grade 8 team, joined the core teachers, he was replaced by Earl as band teacher.

I met Earl in his office tucked away in the band room. He was quite cordial, and seemed to have a positive attitude. I asked him about his perception of teaming. He shared:

I think it is good for the kids because the team approach. The teams talk about what is going on in all classes and if there is a problem area how they can all work on that problem area together. I think that is a good equation in education. Teaming is the way you can discuss the problem, the high points and the low points, of what is going on with your kids. (Vol. 5e, p. 20)

Earl believes the concept of collaboration and teaming is good for education. He believes the kids benefit from teaming because teachers can come together and discuss how to deal with their needs. However, Earl believes that with his schedule it is not

possible to have a closer collaboration with other teachers as a group, but it can be done in a limited way on a one-on-one basis.

Earl also shared the idea that at several times during the year it would be helpful if all the teams could meet to discuss expectations or do an assessment. Earl shares:

I would like to at some point either at the beginning of the year or at the end of the year, I think probably at the end of the year, to talk about my impact on what they do academically and how that fits into the scheme of things. I think sometimes it would be nice if all those teams I could meet and say "O.K. now how do you feel or think what the kids are doing in sixth grade, seventh and eighth grade?" At the beginning, at the end, or maybe even both, and talk about what the expectations are and what has happened in the course of the year. That would be a good idea. (Vol. 5e, p. 20)

Previous interviews with encore teachers have shown that some are quite upset with the present schedule, because it does not allow them time to team with the core teachers or with each other. One teacher expressed a desire for others to approach and suggest ways how they can collaborate. Earl has quite a different attitude. His philosophy is to reach out. He shares:

I make a point of going to these people and talking to them. We talk about schedules. We talk about special things coming up. For example, in the sixth-grade team we are closer because we have several special ed kids that are in my band club and we communicate that she has to have them so many days a week and I say, well, if I can have them so many days a week we can work a schedule out. Most kids can be made to fit into the flow, and that schedule helps. I think that it really depends on the person. I think you have to make yourself available and aware of what is going on in different areas. I think it is our responsibility as individuals in our own areas to make sure that we know what is going on in the school and the different teams. We can't sit in our own little corner and wait for them to come to us because sometimes that may not happen. (Vol. 5e, p. 21)

Perhaps Earl has discovered something important. He believes that it is his responsibility to know what is happening in the school and among the teams. As a band teacher who divides his time between the middle and high schools, he has an identity

crisis at times. Earl feels that his situation requires him to be more diligent in keeping in touch with the other teams. Earl continues:

That is not a good situation. I wish that I could spend more time with one or the other because right now I don't have a lunch hour with either group. A lot of times when you have a lunch hour you communicate and find out what is going on with all the people. When you spend only a certain amount of time at one school and then go to the other school I feel kind of left out in left field. That is why I have to be so aggressive sometimes and talk to the other people to find out what is going on. (Vol. 5e, p. 22)

Earl's attitude about the encore team appears to be different from others. He does not express resentment or displeasure with the present situation, but he has decided to reach out and collaborate as much as possible. This may be so because, unlike most of the encore teachers, he has only been in the school district for a short time. Earl perhaps does not have the same historical perspective and feelings of ownership toward the issue. Whatever the reason for his attitude, it appears that his desire to reach out to others helps him accomplish his tasks.

The next group I will deal with, comprise people who are not on exclusively on any particular team, but visit and contribute to every team. They are the school counselor, the media specialist, and the principal. They all share their perspective on teaming. One important role they play in this study, is to provide an additional source of data. This assists in triangulation by confirming the perspectives given by members of the individual teams.

School Counselor

Gordon is a tall affable person with the personality that makes him well suited for his position as school counselor. He appears to have a very good rapport with the

students and teachers. Gordon has worked in the district for 21 years, and therefore has a good historical perspective on teaming at Lakeside, since he is a member of all the teams.

My main reason for interviewing him was to gain an outside perspective of how the teams operate and to corroborate findings from the data collected on the teams.

I asked Gordon to give me an overview from his perspective of how he saw collaboration at Lakeside. Here is his perspective on the teams:

Each team develops its own personality like a family does, and develops its own style and perspective. I think that for the most part it's good. It enables teachers to bring out their own style a lot more. The problem with it sometimes is that in each grade level sometimes there is some sparring. There is disagreement on how discipline is enforced, or how curriculum is perceived because each grade level has developed its own style so much, that sometimes it's a little difficult for them to really accommodate other styles of the grade levels on either side of them. (Vol. 5g, p. 29)

It is interesting that the family metaphor used by some team members to describe themselves is used again by the counselor to describe the teams. Gordon also points out that each team is so committed to their style, that it is sometimes difficult for them to accommodate other teams.

The issue of the encore teams was introduced in almost the same breath while Gordon spoke of the core teams. This situation of the encore teachers is described by Gordon as the biggest loss and biggest problem. He shares:

The biggest loss, the biggest problem is probably what's happened with non-core teachers what we call the encore teachers. Some of them are very upset at having been excluded from the teams, and they really have to be because during the times when the teams meet, the kids have to be somewhere so they go to the encore classes, and subsequently the encore teachers aren't really able to be a part of most of the planning. And that's probably the biggest problem we've had which is really too bad because a lot of the courses like art and phys. Ed., shop, are classes that probably fit the needs of middle school kids more appropriately than most of the core subjects do. The core subjects are more oriented towards a junior high type perspective—more academic less hands-on. So that's a loss, but other than that, I think it's been a tremendous success. I think it adds a lot of energy to the curriculum. At times it's

very difficult for the teachers, but on the whole I think the kids have benefitted from it tremendously just because the teachers themselves have much more of a feeling of being on a team when working together when they're planning curriculum. (Vol. 5g, p. 29)

Issues which the encore teachers are concerned about are cited by Gordon. He feels that the exclusion of the encore teachers is a loss especially for the students who could benefit from curriculum integration of the core and encore subjects. He feels that, despite the problems, the teaming concept works well at Lakeside.

Each team at Lakeside Middle school appears to be different, and I was curious as to how Gordon perceived each team. Would some of the conclusions I would ultimately reach be corroborated by his perspectives? Here are his perceptions for the teams in Grades 5 through 8:

The fifth grade is probably the most focused of the four. They get right down to business, they are very organized. Each one has particular tasks and subject areas they take care of. They all present to the kids, but one will be responsible for basically deciding what specific lesson they're going to do—very organized.

The sixth-grade team is interesting; they have a hard time. A lot of meetings often look very pleasant, but there are a lot of hard feelings in that team. They struggle with each other a lot. They're very frustrated with each other at times. In terms of taking care of business, they're all professional, and they do a very good job. But it's sometimes very painful actually.

Seventh, they are very professional, fairly traditional. I don't like a lot of the angles like traditional or liberal or conservative because on one hand they are very traditional when they start off, but when it comes to the individual kid, they'll do just about anything they can.

The eighth-grade team, they are probably the most fun; they really do have fun, and they have fun with the kids too. They really enjoy themselves, they enjoy their team, they really enjoy their kids. (Vol. 5g, p. 32)

I find that the perceptions of Gordon concerning the teams are similar to what I have discovered in the data. Having an individual who is a team insider and an outsider

at the same time is valuable for me in this study because it assists in structural corroboration.

Roles play an important part of team development and operation. Gordon's perceptions of the leadership role on each team is similar to what I have discovered thus far. There is a bit of uncertainty as to whether any one person takes the leadership role, but there seems to be a pattern. Here is his perspective on leadership in the various teams:

Probably Claire in the fifth grade, but Dori really shares that too. In the sixth grade, Angela would be the one that would kind of get things going and make sure things were taken care of. But I think that David kind of sets the standard for a lot of the teaching style. In seventh grade Adrian and Celeste kind of share that role I think. So a lot of times it's probably pairs, actually now that I think about it. In the eighth grade it would probably be Carmen and Ava; they're such a pair that they're almost like one anyway. (Vol. 5g, pp. 34-35)

Gordon has come to the realization that on every team there appears to be co-leadership! This is corroborated by one teacher on the Grade 5 team (Brent), who described their leadership as two-headed.

Before the end of my interview with Gordon, I asked him about the role of the principal in teaming at Lakeside. Here is his response:

Henry's only been here for about a year and a half now. And Don [the previous principal] is really the one that set these up. I think Henry really kind of kept what Don got going. Henry's style is to give each team a fair amount of latitude. He gives them certain parameters, for schedules, curriculum demands, expectations. Some of them may not even be spoken, he gives them a lot of latitude in working with that. . . . A lot of the teams get very frustrated with Henry because they want him to set up a lot of discipline structure. . . . There's kind of a stress there where they're kind of waiting for the principal to nail down a lot of things. (Vol. 5g, p. 35)

One of the principles which the principal operates from is to give the teams autonomy. As I have discovered in the course of this study, the teachers appreciate that

about Henry. However, this is the first indication I have had where there is frustration because Henry is not more involved in the disciplinary aspect of the school. Gordon appears to agree with the principal's way of operation, and describes what he thinks the principal's role should be:

I find myself doing this too, having to come to terms with the principal not being the father figure in the school. Everybody kind of wants the principal to be the father figure who comes home after work and punishes everybody and sets everything straight. And really the principal should be the educational leader. And the teams really need to be the ones to set their tone for their grade levels in terms of discipline. So yeah, there's a fair amount of stress on that. But I think that's Henry's response. . . . But I think that Henry wants his role to be much more one of educational leader pulling together the curriculum. Standing back and watching as the teams find their own way. And I think a lot of things, particularly taking over the discipline, is kind of scary for them. (Vol. 5g, p. 36)

The teams, according to Gordon, want the principal to be more involved with the discipline of students. Henry is more interested in being the educational leader and allowing the teams to be autonomous. Again, Gordon uses the family metaphor in describing the role teachers apparently want the principal to play. I wonder why the teachers are reluctant to assume full responsibility for discipline? Though it may be a common occurrence in schools, the reluctance appears to be more pronounced at Lakeside.

The perspectives which I gained from Gordon about the teams were indeed valuable. I saw him as a person who could corroborate some of my hunches and observations about the teams, and could give a good overview of teaming at Lakeside Middle School. Gordon's perceptions have been valuable to this study.

Media Specialist

Another individual who has a school-wide view of the teams is the Media

Specialist. Fran, like Gordon, is also a member of all the teams, but is directly involved with teaching the students. Fran has been involved in library and media work for 28 years, 14 of which have been at Lakeside. One benefit of her background is that she began as an elementary school teacher. This fact shapes the way in which she interacts with the teams at Lakeside. I asked Fran how her role in the teams differs from a typical media specialist in other schools. She shares:

I am involved a lot in curriculum and a lot in what goes on in the classroom. I am also aware of students' and faculty's meetings. I probably take an active role in seeking that out and I don't necessarily wait for them to come to me, although now they do. It used to be I went to them and said ,you know, we could do this for you and for their students, and consequently they learned that I can be an asset. I am hoping that I still am. Curriculum changes, and you need to be aware of the kinds of changes that are going on, so that they're not teaching something that has no relevance. (Vol. 5f, p. 24)

Fran's involvement in the teams was due to her initiative. She was willing to share with the teachers how she could help them in the classroom with lessons and curriculum. When I first worked at Lakeside I was impressed with her ability to work closely with the various teams and integrate their lessons into her role. Here is her description of how she operates with individual teams:

I meet with blocks of teachers by grade levels and I do this once a week for anywhere from 15 minutes to 30 minutes, no more than 30. We relate to what we are going to do for the next week regarding their curriculum and I know what they have planned in science, social studies, English, art whatever kind of activities they are doing. I try to relate to a lesson or a book or something that kids feel free for coming to the library about other than just checking out books. . . . I see them all at one time or another and most often I see them at least once a week, for some reason. (Vol. 5f, p. 24)

The first 15-30 minutes of each team planning meeting is usually taken by Fran. Whatever the teachers have planned for their curriculum, she finds a way to integrate and supplement it with materials from the library.

One very effective way in which Fran helps students learn is to bring individual classes into the library and teach them in her special class. If a class was studying about a certain country or time period, when the students entered the library there would be music from that country or period playing. There would also be artifacts or crafts appropriate to the theme, and most significantly, Fran would be in full costume. When I asked her about this, here was her response:

I love middle school. My family thinks I'm crazy, but I have a whole closet wardrobe full of outfits. I think it is important when you are talking about historical, fictions, or a sports book or some things that have to do with mysteries that you dress the part. Sometimes we serve food, sometimes we have a game or something we play. Sometimes I just dress up and act as if I am a person from that time period. I think it helps kids remember better. If I do this all the way from fifth grade to eighth grade they don't think it is so strange anymore. In fact they think it is kind of fun. They also will look at me in the hall and say "Oh, I remember when you were ____ and you talked about ____" and I say that's right. It kind of helps relate a visual to the printed material. (Vol. 5f, pp. 24-25)

Fran's method of helping students remember lessons is quite effective. Students at Lakeside are quite impressed, even though most of them are now accustomed to her approach.

Fran noted that the only way she was able to operate as she has, is because of the time available to her. She relates:

I would say that probably the biggest influence in this building is when we went to block scheduling. Because that meant that teachers had a common planning time and I didn't have to run around to individual teachers. When they have common planning time I would schedule a time once a week to meet with groups of three or four and that cuts down on your time a lot. When they are doing this, if they have 45-minute schedules or 90-minute blocks they also seem to have more time to have you get involved with the class and to make whatever lesson you are doing relevant. . . . So, block scheduling really played an important part in my life for communication and relevancy. (Vol. 5f, p. 26)

Near the end of the interview, I asked Fran what role the principal played in the

teams' ability to interact with her as they do. She appreciates the support she has received from the administration. Here is her response:

There has been a lot of support. I have been through three principals since I have been here. The first principal supported the library media program. Knew exactly what he thought library media people should be doing and was correct in his assumption. It wasn't checking out books, so it ended up that I had support from the very beginning. I actually had support from the teachers because they had made the recommendation that they needed a full-time media person and not an aide. They had several meetings as to what they could do to improve the middle school and that was one of their priorities. Two other principals after the initial one also supported library media programs. . . . The third principal that we currently have supports that idea wholly and, like I said, they have planning time to do so and we take advantage of that. (Vol. 5f, p. 26)

Fran is quite happy about the support she receives and the role that she plays in the teams at Lakeside. Support comes both from the teachers and the principal. This enables her to enrich the school's curriculum and therefore improve the school.

Core Teachers' Concerns

Of all the core teams at Lakeside, only members of the Grade 8 team made mention of or expressed concern about the encore team. All three who mentioned the problems faced by encore teachers have previously worked in that capacity. Here is Bill's perspective:

I think the way we have our scheduling makes it very flexible for us with the time in the course of the day. Basically, it's up to the team to block out the schedule, and that makes it convenient. Working in some of the other areas like the art and shop, phys. ed. and the band, those are some of the problems that we have to work out as a team. And then the sharing of teachers who teach those classes, like high school, because they move a lot into time when they are here. That's probably one of the biggest difficulties is working out that schedule knowing that we can't have this block of time in the morning or this block of time in the mid-morning or just anything we want to do because someone's got to be here who is shared with another school building. Their time is locked in, there are no options. Once we get that worked out, and the schedule day being up to us, that really helps. (Vol. 4b, p. 20)

Bill can understand the plight of the encore teachers because quite recently, as band teacher, he faced the same feelings of isolation. He also was torn between two buildings and faced a sort of identity crisis. This makes me wonder if that isolation motivated him to change and when the opportunity arose to join a core team.

Another core subject teacher from the Grade 8 team who expressed concern for the encore teachers was Carmen. When she expressed some ideas about the future plans of her team, the encore teachers came into the dialogue. She shares:

To bring in the art, and the shop, and gym, and foreign language more into our curriculum, right now they're kind of sitting off on the fringe, and that again is that lonely place to be. I think they feel that very strongly, and so we should try to do some projects that would bring them actually into our planning sessions, in with us as team members. (Vol. 4c, p. 29)

Carmen, who is a special education teacher, probably understands the isolation which comes from being alone in a classroom. She shared that the Grade 8 team has thoughts about including the encore teachers in their planning and projects for the new school year.

The third teacher on the Grade 8 team who expresses concern for the encore teachers was Ava. When I asked her about challenges facing her team as a part of her answer, the encore issue surfaced. She shares:

I guess the greatest challenge is making people feel that they are indeed part of the team when they don't have the common time. Like teachers who are in the encore program, and I've been part of the encore program, so I know what you feel like--like you're just not really a part and you try and bring people in so that they feel like that they are an integral part and scheduling doesn't allow for that. (Vol. 4a, p. 3)

There seems to be a level of frustration coming through the remarks of Ava as she relates the problem of including the encore teachers when the schedule does not allow it. Interestingly, she too has been an encore teacher, therefore she knows the isolation.

The only teachers who have mentioned the problems faced by the encore teachers have been three members of the Grade 8 team. All three have previously worked as encore teachers, and this may explain the empathy which they are able to share. It is possible that the previous isolation has made them more appreciative of the opportunity that they have to work together now. Perhaps that is part of the reason why there is so much laughter and camaraderie in the Grade 8 team.

The Principal

I entered Lakeside one day as substitute teacher, and the secretary asked if I had met the new principal. I had not, and she immediately escorted me into his office and introduced us. I noticed the new name tag located above the office door and made a mental note to remember his name. Henry was very cordial and invited me in for a brief chat. He mentioned that he had heard a lot about me and was happy that I was willing to work at Lakeside. After tactfully declining his offer of some coffee, we chatted for a short while, then I left.

Since then I have observed his *modus operandi*, and involvement is important to him. He eats with the students in the cafeteria, and visits team meetings whenever he can. I met with Henry in his office for the interview and, as usual, the atmosphere was relaxed and casual. We briefly discussed my research, and the progress he has made in his studies toward a Ph.D. I asked about his background in education. Here is his description:

I started off as a high-school gym teacher and I taught at the high-school level for 3 years. I then had an opportunity to go to a middle school and I started to do that against the advice of many of my colleagues. I decided that I was brave enough and I wound up staying at a middle school in Illinois for 5 years. There was a position as

an assistant principal open where I was teaching and I decided it was the best to go to administration so I became a middle school assistant principal. I then went back to the high school to be a high-school assistant principal for 3 years and found out that middle school still wanted me back. I am a middle school principal. (Vol. 5h, p. 40)

Henry is new as principal at Lakeside, and I wanted to know what his experience has been at the school since he came. When I asked him about his experience, this was his reply:

The thing that I probably think about a lot is that I am the only administrator in this building so I take care of everything from making sure that the grass is cut and that the outside of the building looks nice, to important things like curriculum and adopting new textbooks. So I think what I found out about this building is that I am a one-man operation and I get a lot of different things and they all come at different times. Times are very hectic right now; it is a very hectic time of the year. There are a lot of things coming due before the end of the year. I think it is probably more challenging than the last position that I had at a very large high school with 2,400 students, and I was one of four assistant principals. (Vol. 5h, p. 40)

What Henry is experiencing seems typical for a principal in a small school district. He has a lot of varied responsibilities as opposed to his duties at a larger school. As the only administrator in the building, he is quite busy. Henry has not had any formal teaming experience before. When he came to Lakeside the dynamics of teaming here were a pleasant surprise. He shares:

I was very surprised that in a school this size that they could arrange to have a common planning time. I think that is excellent teaming. . . . I always look at this common planning time and I was very impressed. . . . I was really happy and really impressed by the way the teachers organized that. (Vol. 5h, p. 41)

Credit is given to the teachers for the organization and success of the teaming concept at the school. I was curious about Henry's role in collaboration within the teams. The various teams at Lakeside have expressed that his involvement has been limited, though he has been supportive. Henry admits that he would like to be more involved

with the teams, but other responsibilities absorb his attention. He relates about his involvement:

I think it is probably not as strong as I wanted it to be. I started off the year by attending a lot of the team meetings. My intent was to attend a team meeting maybe every other week, to be available to listen to what the teachers are meeting about and find out how they were doing and offer suggestions and be a sounding board. Unfortunately, there are other distractions that pull me away from that more and more as time went on. I have other responsibilities to be a special education coordinator for the district. I also get a lot of meetings to attend. I get pulled away from this building more than I would like to. I do support philosophically what the teachers do and I think by supporting them I am like an invisible person lurking at the meetings. I support the concept of grade level teaming. I feel that I am there as a support even though I am not there physically. I am supporting them philosophically. (Vol. 5h, pp. 41-42)

Henry's response does validate the perceptions of many teachers on the teams.

His involvement is limited though he is supportive. Among the things that Henry would like to see improved is the level of involvement among the teams. He said:

I noticed there was very much of a division in the fifth-grade and sixth-grade teams. There is an effort being made between teams. That is one of the things that I am trying to work on. I am hoping one of the things that comes out of this is that people will work more together as a building, to work together for a common goal. I saw that lacking when I first came, and I was very surprised that a school this size that they are too small to not be focused on a product or an end result. . . . I think it is getting better. That is something I would like to work towards. (Vol. 5h, p. 42)

Despite his perception of a weakness in team-to-team interactions, Henry has seen efforts to remedy the situation. He feels that a school of this size should be more effective in collaboration among the teams. Henry's perspective on the individual teams parallels the observations made thus far. Some teams are strong, and some are not. Personalities on the teams in Henry's opinion are what determine the team's strength. As a leader, there are some changes which he plans to make in the coming year. The moving

of teachers to different teams is seen as a possible solution to the conflicts which exist.

Henry shares:

Well, I think we have some really strong teams. The team meetings I have gone to, I can tell which teams are the stronger teams and which teams are the weaker teams. I think the personalities have probably determined if the team is going to be successful or not. It is easy for me to see conflicting personalities on the same team which may not reach a real good collaborative process. It is my responsibility as a leader if I see that to maybe suggest some movement of teachers to another grade level. We are going to have some conflict. Next year we have a requirement so we have an opportunity to make some changes. (Vol. 5h, p. 42)

In subsequent conversations with Henry, I discovered that he had definite plans to make some changes in the new school year. He did not indicate specifically how personalities will be taken into account when assignments are made to teams.

The issue of the encore teachers is one point which I felt necessary to get Henry's perception on. This has been like the skeleton in the Lakeside family closet. I wanted to know how he viewed the situation, and what he planned to do about it. Here is how he saw it:

That is a good question and that is one of the areas that seem to be overlooked in a lot of schools, and I think it is no exception in this school. Because of the way any schedule works it is tough to be somewhere at sometime. Unfortunately, our encore teachers are meeting with students while the core teachers are having classes. That has been a concern of mine and I need to do a better job as a leader to get those encore teachers together and make them a team, and they can have team meetings before school or after school at different times. There is a lack of belonging. The encore teachers don't feel like they belong anywhere, they are just kind of out there. I have spoken to many other principals about ways to solve this and so it is a concern. I don't know what the solution is except that it is my responsibility as a leader to try and find a way that maybe meet with those people once a month or do something so they can have some more time than what they do. (Vol. 5h, p. 43)

Like many teachers at Lakeside, the principal is concerned about the lack of involvement and the isolation of the encore teachers. The focus of Henry's response to my question is in the area of trying to get the encore team to operate like a team. It

appears that the difficulty of scheduling a common time for core and encore teachers precludes the possibility for much interaction among the teams.

Henry has had some ideas about how to improve the involvement of the encore teachers. The plan would be to relieve the encore teachers from their classes periodically in order to give them more time to collaborate.

That is another plan that I have, that is to do some internal relieving of teachers. I think the benefits of that would probably outweigh the cost. . . . We would have to look at that and decide, and I know that couldn't be on a weekly basis but it might be every other week or month to month. That is a plan that I have thought about. You know substitutes are few and far between, good ones. That is another concern, is the personnel who is out there and who would be willing to come in. (Vol. 5h, p. 44)

The possibility of having substitute teachers come in periodically to relieve the encore teachers seems to be a partial solution to the problem. There are two limitations to this plan however. The first concern is financial. The school's budget for substitute teachers is limited, therefore teachers on the teams will probably only be relieved periodically. The second concern Henry expressed is the quality of substitutes available. Good ones are hard to find.

Henry sees this as one possible solution to the problem of involving the encore teachers. Beyond this idea, he is not sure what else can be done. Despite the problems, Henry has some goals and plans for teaming and other educational projects at Lakeside during the next school year. I asked him to share his wishes with me.

I would like to see some connections being made between either subject areas or grade levels. One of the things that I read about all the time is having kids make connection with the outside world within the walls of the school, and how it applies in real life. I would like to see more collaboration between teams. And maybe more experiences outside the school perhaps in a job setting. So when they go to the job they won't say, Why do we have to learn this? They know why. (Vol. 5h, p. 44)

All three of Henry's wishes for the next school year are connected to collaboration

among the teams. Two of them, connections in the curriculum, and collaboration between teams, are concerns that are shared by many of the teachers at Lakeside. Our dialog concluded with Henry expressing his feelings about working at Lakeside.

My philosophy is we can all be better. We can all get better at what we do. I am very fortunate to have the staff that I have. They are dedicated too. I am not finding myself fighting personalities of people that are resistant to change. There are some of the staff who are resistant, but I don't think that is real overwhelming. (Vol. 5h, p. 44)

Henry has a positive outlook for teaming at Lakeside, and he appreciates the quality and dedication of his staff. His philosophy of continuous improvement is one which teachers at Lakeside appear to share. Whatever resistance Henry encounters among the teachers can be overcome.

Henry is doing well as a new principal. The thing that the teachers really appreciate about him is the amount of autonomy he gives them. Lakeside has a stable staff, many of the teachers having spent almost all of their careers at the school. They have seen principals come and go, and have a strong sense of ownership in the school.

Summary

Most of the encore teachers certainly feel upset. Perhaps not so much with the core teachers, but with a system which clearly favors the core teachers. There was a sense of despair among some in the encore group when I asked if they think the situation would ever change. The best they could hope for was a greater effort to work within the system in which they operated.

Despite the negative feelings, the encore teachers appear to enjoy their jobs and look out for the welfare of the students. From my experience in substituting for them on occasion, I could tell that they are professional and effective in what they do.

CHAPTER 6

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Team teaching is like tag team wrestling. After you've been beat up, you can make the tag and let someone else take a turn.

Team teaching is like tag team wrestling, once you make the tag, you've lost control of what is happening in the ring. Of course, you can always barge back in.

Team teaching is like playing in a symphony. You and your colleagues work toward integrating your individual themes into a unified whole. The result is an experience fulfilling for both the audience and musicians.

Team teaching is like playing in a rock band. You have talented people with ample egos, each with a different vision of the group and each aching to go back to a solo career but knowing that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Team teaching is like a marriage--an arranged marriage.-- William Silver and Robert McGowan, "Adventures in Team Teaching."

Introduction

Four core teams and one encore team have been described at Lakeside Middle School. The four core teams share similarities due to their history, longevity, and environment. There were also differences among the teams. This cross-case analysis has as its purpose to identify and describe these similarities and differences as the research questions are answered.

The responses given by the teachers have been categorized into themes containing

features which all of the teams have in common. I have also identified areas where the teams differed as a point of comparison.

Research Question 1

How do individuals and teams experience teaming?

Team Characteristics

This section of the study identifies areas in which teams at Lakeside experience teaming. It describes the characteristics which define the individual teams. The areas include camaraderie, benefitting students, and exchange.

Camaraderie

A major theme which emerged among all the teams was the concept of camaraderie. I use this term to refer to the team member's ability to socially bond and work together. Teachers view their relationships with fellow team members and the ability to work together as being an important part of the teaming process. In recent years, teams are being used more and more to overcome teacher isolation and to increase camaraderie (Boles, 1992; Erb & Doda, 1989; Fullan, 1992; Maeroff, 1993). These studies suggest that school reform and improvement require replacing the isolated and autonomous teacher with teams who interact in planning and sharing new ideas. The teams at Lakeside share camaraderie (see Table 1).

Benefitting Students

The teachers on the Lakeside core teams also view teaming as working for the students. They see themselves as caring for students and helping them to reach their full

TABLE 1

CAMARADERIE

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>Here we get together every week. Everybody knows what everybody is doing. (Vol. 1a, p. 2)</p> <p>Well, we've always had high expectations, we all just jumped in. (Vol. 1d, p. 32)</p> <p>It's almost like a marriage—you know what the other person is going to say because you've spent so much time together. (Vol. 1c, p. 25)</p>	<p>I think that we have different personalities, but we work well together because we compliment each other. (Vol. 2a, p. 5)</p> <p>There have been times when it has been so smooth and great that you feel like 'wow' our team is really together. (Vol. 2c, p. 16)</p> <p>Whenever we plan something that in fact manages to pull the whole sixth grade team together it raises the energy to a positive level. (Vol. 3d, p. 20)</p>	<p>I really believe the #1 thing is basically being able to talk to another adult the other part is you are working with individuals who are striving for a common goal. (Vol. 3a, p. 4)</p> <p>I think that we all enjoy what we are doing, and that always makes you a better team. (Vol. 3c, p. 20)</p> <p>We give each other support on good and bad days. (Vol. 3d, p. 25)</p>	<p>It was overwhelming it was absolutely phenomenal!...it's a real energizing situation, everybody helps everybody else, and it just works real well. (Vol. 4a, p. 1)</p> <p>Our team has really good chemistry All of our team members get along well professionally, on a personal level as well. (Vol. 4b, p. 13)</p> <p>So its kind of nice. I don't feel left out there like a fish out of water. (Vol. 4d, p. 33)</p>

Note. In this chapter all of the quotes in tables are organized in a specific way. Volume numbers represent grade levels, and the letters represent the teachers in the grades.

potential and increase achievement. Lee and Smith (1993) were the first to directly demonstrate the impact of teaming on student achievement. Drawing data from a sample of 8,845 students from 377 schools, they concluded that in schools that were less departmentalized and more teamed, students scored higher on achievement tests in math and reading. Warren and Muth (1995) conducted large studies on teaming, and concluded that students whose teachers teamed and made use of common planning time show greater satisfaction and commitment to school work. Many teachers responded that the students are their reason for teaming, and expressed their desire to benefit students (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
BENEFITTING STUDENTS

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Doing things that would work for the kids and not always necessarily what works for us. (Vol. 1b, p. 11)	If we work together so it benefits the student then we're being successful in our collaboration. (Vol. 2a, p. 3)	You want to bring things about to give you a chance to really know the kids better. . . . At this age level you kind of have to look after them. Vol. 3a, p. 4	I have never seen a group of people work so closely together for the good of a child. (Vol. 4a, p. 1)
You have to keep in mind that you're doing this for kids. (Vol. 1d, p. 34)	To collaborate is to use strategies that benefit students. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)	We exchange ideas on how to strengthen those successes or how to help a student where there is no success. Vol. 3b, p. 11	We have 'we care' meetings which is where the principal, child, and parent come in. We let them know that we want the child to be successful, to turn around. That's the best. (Vol. 4a, p. 3)
Each teacher gets to do what they love, and that really comes through with the kids. (Vol. 1e, p. 46)	But I'm mainly there to clarify and help those kids. . . . I think it's the most positive for the students. (Vol. 2c, p. 15)		

Exchange

Teaming is also seen as an exchange by the teams at Lakeside. Each person makes a contribution to the team and in return receives respect, ideas for solving problems, and support for dealing with difficult situations (see Table 3). Studies by Mills, Powell, and Pollack (1992) support the concept of teachers feeling positive about contribution to teams.

The perceptions shared by the teachers are consistent with my observations and experiences. The atmosphere of team meetings and teacher interactions indicates that there is a lot of respect and camaraderie among members of the teams. For the core teachers at Lakeside, these issues are an important component of their definition of teaming.

There are two major areas in which the teams at Lakeside Middle School were different. The first way is their mode of operation. All of the teams planned and carried out those plans in different ways. Practices ranged from the Grade 5 team where each teacher planned a lesson for the others on the team, to the Grade 7 team where everyone planned and taught his or her own lessons.

The teams were also different in their stages of development. The stages ranged from the Grade 6 team, which was storming, to Grade 8 which was performing. In spite of their differences, teams at Lakeside have one important thing in common: a desire to continue teaming. The teachers I have spoken to and interacted with are convinced that teaming benefits the school and helps their students. Three themes emerged from the views of teaming. The first was camaraderie, the second was benefitting students, and the third was exchange. These were ways that teachers at Lakeside experienced teaming.

TABLE 3

EXCHANGE

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>You're not one teacher, hoping that you're hitting the right objectives in your teaching; there are other people that are helping you meet those objectives. (Vol. 1a, p. 2)</p> <p>You would never see some of the ideas that somebody else has that are really neat ideas, you wouldn't possibly be able to think up as many on your own. The wealth of ideas is much greater. (Vol. 1c, p. 23)</p>	<p>You really want to collaborate. You want to give and take, you want ideas that can go both ways. Some are rejected without great difficulty and others accepted. (Vol. 2b, p. 12)</p>	<p>Give and take, working together, knowing what each other is doing. I think those would be the big parts of it. (Vol. 3a, p. 4)</p> <p>We would plan one day a week and to help ourselves out, I planned the math so that all three of the classes were doing the same activities. One of the other teachers planned the Social Studies and one of the other ones planned the Science. We sort of supplemented each other's weaker areas. (Vol. 3c, p. 18)</p>	<p>Everybody's ideas hold equal weight and you sort through everybody's idea, exchanging bits and pieces of each one in order to come up with what you really deem to be the best solution for the problem. (Vol. 4a, p. 2)</p> <p>That seems to be what made our team work out, everybody is willing to say, "you got a great idea," or, "Let's try it your way, if it doesn't work, we'll come back to the way I was thinking of." (Vol. 4c, p. 23)</p>

The Role of the Principal

Principals play a significant role in the operation of teams in a school (Martin, 1994; Williamson,1996). Members of the Lakeside Middle School teams perceive the principal as playing a limited role within the groups. Many times they expressed a desire for the principal to play a greater role by providing them with more direction and attending more team meetings.

Despite his limited role in the teams, the principal does contribute to teaming at Lakeside. Also, because of his position, his role is an important part of the experience of teaming at the school. There are three ways the teams perceive him to contribute: he is perceived as a supporter, enabler, and link.

Supporter

The principal's first and strongest role is as supporter. Most of the respondents pointed out that Henry was there whenever they needed him, and others expressed their expectations of support. (See Table 4.) The teachers appreciated the support of the principal. Researchers such as Maeroff (1993), Schlechty (1990), and Cherry (1991) stress the importance of having the principal act as a supporter of teaching teams.

On some teams at Lakeside, the principal's advice was an important part of the decision-making process. On others, he served as a mediator during difficult times. The Grade 7 team felt that the principal should be more involved in the process of curriculum integration since that issue was very important to them.

The principal himself acknowledges his limited participation in the teams. Henry intended to have greater participation when the school year began, but as the multiple

responsibilities of a small school district and a small school were placed on him, his involvement decreased. His plans for the coming year include greater team support and participation

TABLE 4
THE PRINCIPAL AS SUPPORTER

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>Meeting with us periodically to know what team is doing and what we're planning and working on. (Vol. 1a, p. 6)</p> <p>He's always there to give us extra time and accommodations as we occasionally need. (Vol. 1c, p. 24)</p> <p>If we have questions, he is there to answer them, but he really doesn't interfere. (Vol. 1e, p. 45)</p>	<p>He is there when we have a problem or concern. (Vol. 2a, p. 4)</p> <p>For the most part, I think he gives us the ball and expects us to handle things. (Vol. 2c, p. 17)</p> <p>I would imagine it [his role] would be to make sure the teams work. That would seem a little obvious. (Vol. 2d, p. 22)</p>	<p>He is not stopping the creativity, and he is there if we need him. I guess he is doing the role that we need at this point in time. (Vol. 3a, p. 5)</p> <p>He is a good listener. I would say more than anything he just sort of moves us into reaching some conclusions. (Vol. 3b, p. 12)</p> <p>In the past when we have asked him for certain procedures and policies he has been supportive. (Vol. 3d, p. 26)</p>	<p>I think he tends to be an advisor and observer. . . . And just kinda stay in touch with what we're doing. (Vol. 4b, p. 15)</p> <p>I think his role is to facilitate us, to allow us to be a team and to trust us. . . . I know he is always very supportive of us. And whatever we decide to do, he will stand behind us. (Vol. 4c, p. 26 & 30)</p>

Enabler

Maeroff (1991) shares the National Education Association's findings about principals as enablers. The NEA along with corporate partners searched the country during the 1988-1989 school year to find 115 teachers from a pool of 20,000 nominees

considered the most exceptional in America. When the teachers were asked to share how it was possible for them to perform so well, they consistently reported that it was because they had principals who supported them and allowed them to take risks. At Lakeside the teachers appeared to feel free to take risks knowing that they had the principal's encouragement. This freedom to take risks is evident in the multiple ways in which teams operate at Lakeside.

Generally, the teams at Lakeside appreciate the autonomy which they received from the principal in order to operate as they do. Autonomy is one aspect of teaming which all the teams value highly. The teams recognize that the freedom to operate within wide boundaries without concern about limitations being placed upon them by the principal is an asset to their ability to team.

Link

The third perception is that the principal acts as the only link which holds the various teams in the school together. Since communication and collaboration between teams are lacking, the principal is seen as a link which keeps them together. Williamson (1996) points out that principals serve in the peculiar role of being both insiders and outsiders. This can be an asset in connecting teams within schools. At Lakeside the principal as an administrator who has contact with all of the teams provides the only form of coherence for teaming at the school. Whenever he visits team meetings he would share relevant information about what was happening on other teams.

From the principal's perspective, the concept of teaming is a new experience for him as an administrator, he is very interested in it, and does all that he can to assist in the

process. Henry is committed to teaming, and thinks that it has the potential to make an even greater difference in his school.

In conclusion, roles of the principal evolved from the data. The first is as supporter of the teams. The second role is as an enabler, and the third is a link between teams.

Team Leadership

Team leadership is a vital part of team development. Establishing leadership is the first important step in team organization (Glatthorn & Spencer, 1986). Mac Iver (1990) in his studies showed that teams with leaders (whether appointed, elected, or rotated) appear to be more effective than those without leaders. Other researchers (George & Shewey, 1994; Rottier, 1996) point out that team leaders not only ensure improvement in teams, but contribute to the school's long-term effectiveness by playing a key role in the school's decision-making process.

No Formal Roles

One aspect of teaming at Lakeside Middle School is the absence of formally designated leadership roles. All of the teams studied related that no one has been selected as leader of the team, but that all members share in the leadership role as needed. Teams at Lakeside, while they have no appointed leaders, have individuals who assume the position. This mode of operation appears to work well for the way the teams operate.

Seniority and Leadership

Another concept which emerged was the connection between the length of time

on the team and the tendency to lead. Clearly, the teachers who have been on the teams for many years are most familiar with the history of the team and the mode of operation. This familiarity enables them, according to the new members, to lead the team more efficiently.

Co-Leadership

The third facet of leadership in Lakeside teams is the concept of co-leadership. After looking at the data on team roles it finally occurred to me that the teams even collaborate in leadership! Each team has two veteran teachers who co-lead. This leadership arrangement is not spoken, but understood and accepted. There appears to be no struggle for power on any team, but the two leaders work together to give needed direction (see Table 5). No teacher in Grade 6 spoke of team leadership during my interviews. This may be a result of the teachers' stormy relationships.

Summary

In summary, members of the Lakeside Middle School teams experience collaboration in a variety of ways. Their experience is felt through camaraderie with colleagues. This serves to enhance their personal relationships. Collaboration is also experienced through benefitting students. This desire to help students is their educational "raison d'être." Another important experience is the process of exchange. Teachers view themselves as reciprocating among themselves in the team environment. This reciprocity enhances their professional relationships.

The principal's role serves as an important part of the experience of teams also.

TABLE 5

TEAM LEADERSHIP

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade
<p>I guess I would call it a two-headed leader. You know, with the two veterans [Claire and Dori], I guess we try to follow them. (Vol. 1a, p. 17)</p> <p>We just role share. This year with two newer people, I think Dori and I [Claire] have sort of taken over for a bit. (Vol. I c, p. 29)</p> <p>Right now Claire and I [Dori] are more of the leaders just because we have been here because we have two new people. (Vol. 1d, p. 37)</p>	<p>In the sixth grade Angela would be the one that would kind of get things going and make sure things were taken care of But I think That David kind of sets the standard for teaching style. (Vol. 5 g, p. 35)</p>	<p>If it is concerned with any other subject matter it depends on which teacher is in charge of that. (Vol. 3b, p. 13)</p> <p>In seventh grade Adrian and Celeste kind of share that [leadership] role I think. (Vol. 5g, p. 35)</p> <p>I thing I am still kind of timid about running the meetings because of being new but I do feel I have worked up to participating my share. (Vol. 3d, p.) 29</p>	<p>In the eighth grade it [leadership] would probably be Carmen and Deidra, they're such a pair they're almost like one anyway. (Vol. 5g, p. 35)</p> <p>It's always shifting as far as you know, so I'm not sure I have a specific role on the team. (Vol. 4a, p. 2)</p> <p>I think Carmen and Deidra tend to be the two who start the talking process. (Vol. 4b, p. 16)</p>

His participation is limited on the teams, but he does play several roles. Henry is seen as a supporter, enabler, and a link between teams.

Leadership, however, though not formally assigned, is shouldered by pairs of veteran teachers. These teams-within-a-team are most acquainted with group history and operation. The experience of the teams at Lakeside Middle school is rich and varied

Research Question 2

What features contribute to the strengthening of teams?

My focus on this question enables me to paint a picture of the journey which teams at Lakeside travel towards being more effective. Teams in this study appear to have positive and optimistic attitudes about teaming as reflected in their definitions (chap. 3, pp. 53 & 77-78; chap. 4, pp. 101, 120-121). These quotes indicate positive feelings about teaming which can contribute to team satisfaction.

Recognizing Strengths

New Team Members

All the teams at Lakeside exhibited various strengths. Of the four core teams at Lakeside, three of them (5, 7, 8) had new team members at the time of my study. I was curious about the experiences of these new teachers who came into teams which had been established for so many years. There are two aspects to having new members on the teams viewed as strengths. The first is the ability of the established members of the teams to incorporate and nurture new members. The veterans on the teams appear to have the ability to make the new team members feel needed. The second aspect is the ability of

the new members on the teams to fit into a structure which has been in place for a long time and to feel free to make a contribution.

I noted that the three teams at Lakeside which appear to function well are the three with new members present. The only team which appears to be storming is Grade 6. This team also does not have any new team members. It appears that new members bring freshness and new ideas to the team and therefore can be beneficial.

Without exception, all of the new teachers felt accepted as a part of their new team. This is so despite research which indicates that new teachers have a difficult time being integrated into teams (Zahoric, 1987). These teachers commented on the way they felt supported by their teams (see Table 6).

Participation was an important component of integrating new members. The new members of the teams felt that they had a part to play in the operation of the teams, and that their contributions were appreciated and respected. Other members of the team also appreciate the participation of the new members. This sense of appreciation served to motivate new team members to be more comfortable in speaking up and contributing ideas to the team.

The feelings of acceptance and support felt by the new members indicate that the established team members communicated these through several ways. The ways include more meetings, going in depth with information, a hug, willingness to help, and escorting a new member to her room.

Donaldson & Sanderson (1996) speak strongly of the importance of incorporation and support for new team members.

TABLE 6

SUPPORTING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Grade 5	Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>We've had more meetings. (Vol. 1c, p. 22)</p> <p>We try to go more in depth about what we mean. . . . I'll say if you need any help with this just holler. And if they holler, we set up a time to meet. (Vol. 1d, p. 36)</p> <p>If they have an idea . . . we try to say 'hey that's great we'll do that too and support any ideas they might come up with (Vol. 1d, p. 36)</p> <p>So far I feel it works. I haven't had any problems. They're always willing to help (Vol. 1e, p. 44)</p> <p>Having two veteran teachers to help two non-veteran teachers, and having their leadership and experience from the past. (Vol 1b, p. 14)</p>	<p>My first day here Celeste met me in the office gave me a big hug walked me down to the room let me in. She made me feel very welcome. Adrian was, he was very welcoming too. Adrian has a real funny sense of humor and once I figured that out I thought O.K. I can handle this. (Vol. 3d, p. 23)</p> <p>I can certainly take Cheryl coming on our team as a good addition. She works very hard and is easy to get along with. (Vol. 3c, p. 20)</p> <p>I think I worked my way to being my fourth part of the team, I think that I have been able to contribute my share of this. (Vol. 3d, pp. 23-24)</p>	<p>Coming in as a new team member this year you know we were pretty solid as a team, and she has just been welcomed in. (Vol. 4a. p. 2)</p> <p>I had a transition and I was real comfortable with it. I didn't have any problems at all. (Vol. 4b, p. 13)</p> <p>It was really a great experience. Carmen helped me to adjust very well. And they're all very open and welcoming. Maybe the first meeting was kind of uncomfortable and unsure, but by the end of the meeting I felt pretty welcome actually. (Vol 4d, p. 32)</p>

People are apt to give the team approach an honest effort if when they join the team they do so with commitment not because they feel forced. Agree early that the team will take time to allow each person to move toward the decision: "Do I want to be involved? Is the mission mine? Is this a good group for me? Am I good for the others?" (p. 114)

Goldeberry (cited in Zahoric, 1987) found that when new teachers were paired with experienced team members, they became more aware of their teaching, and made positive changes in their teaching and classrooms. I have observed how new team members were treated as valued participants of the teams. As a result of my study, I have found that a culture of support and acceptance on the teams was important in helping the new teachers to adjust.

Student Centered

Another feature which contributed to strengthening the teams is their focus on students, which is an important team goal. Teams at Lakeside are strengthened by sharing a common goal, and that is the welfare of students. Mac Iver (1990) indicates that middle schools and teams are potentially society's most powerful force to help adolescents. Teachers indicated that they want the students to have the best possible environment and relationships so that they can be successful in their life journey.

Hockman (1997) and Frana (1998) conclude that collaboration has a strong positive influence on school culture and program innovations. Inger (1993) states: "In schools where teachers worked collaboratively, students can sense the program coherence and a consistency of expectations, which may explain the improved behavior and achievement" (p. 2). Erb (1997) summarizes the results of his study on the impact of teaming on schools.

The benefits of interdisciplinary teaming are no longer merely theoretical. When teamed teachers regularly use common planning time, and shared students, teaching schedules and team space, a positive difference does result. Evidence abounds that teaming results in higher achievement in math, reading, and language arts skills. (p. 310)

Other Strengths

Several additional features emerged from a look at strengthening the teams. The first is time. Time was seen both as an asset to the teams because it afforded them ample opportunity to collaborate within their own team. This extra time allows them to strengthen bonds among themselves and to plan for the students. Donaldson and Sanderson (1996) say, "For teams and groups that are working daily together with children, daily planning and reflecting time is essential. Do not proceed without it!" (p. 157).

Another area was that of ownership. Veteran teachers who have been teaching at Lakeside for a long time were present when the school was erected. Of the 17 core teachers, 12 have worked in the district for more than 10 years, 8 of the 17 for more than 20 years, and only 5 teachers for less than 5 years (see Appendix B, Table 14). Lakeside teachers indicate that being in the institution for so long and having a part to play in its development has given them a sense of ownership. Some of these teachers were consulted on issues such as school location and building design when the new middle school was being planned. In addition, many team members were on the staff when teaming was introduced and had the opportunity to give their input in the process. They were present when the school made the difficult transition to the 90-minute block

schedule it now operates on. These experiences seem to have given the older team members a deep sense of ownership for the school.

Cohen (1991) stresses the importance of teachers having a sense of ownership. She believes that a team's ability to influence change in a school revolves around its capacity for fostering ownership among its members.

School administration acted wisely when they consulted the teachers on plans for the transition to a block schedule format and the physical layout of the new building. These two areas have contributed to the teachers' sense of ownership and loyalty to the school. This sense of ownership strengthens teams by giving them a voice in the process, which fosters a sense of pride in the school.

In summary, numerous features contribute to the strengthening of teams at Lakeside. These include the ability of the team to assimilate new members, and the ability of the new members to contribute to the team. These new teachers offer fresh perspectives and contribute to team development. Time is another feature. A 90-minute block schedule enables teachers to meet and plan together for classes and to team teach. Finally, the issue of ownership contributes to strengthening teams. Teachers at Lakeside, especially those who have been there for a long time, have strong feelings of ownership in the school and the process of teaming. All of these areas assist in the development and strengthening of all teams at Lakeside Middle School.

Satisfaction in Teaming

Team Development Rubric

Team satisfaction was described by using the team development rubric adapted

from a questionnaire from Development Dimensions International. This rubric described development in six areas: purpose, process, communication, involvement, commitment, and trust. (See Appendix B, Tables 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13.) The rubric was used only by the core teams since the encore teams did not collaborate as a unit. The school counselor and media specialist who were a part of all the teams were asked to portray all of the teams to provide a point of comparison, and to corroborate the data (see Appendix B, Table 11).

Among the teams, the lowest portrayal (70) was in the area of process. This has to do with how the team operates, makes decisions, and sets ground rules to solve problems. Perhaps a need for training and team evaluation is reflected in this low descriptor. The highest (81) was in the area of trust. Trust deals with expectations and assumptions which the teams have of each other. A high level of trust might result from their long years of acquaintance with each other and their knowledge of each other's capabilities.

Stage of Development

Another descriptor of the teams is their stage of development. My study addressed four stages of development proposed by Tuckman and Jensen (1977).

To determine which stage the teams were in, I relied on descriptions given by Tuckman and Jensen of the dynamics within the stages. I then matched the descriptions with comments given during the interviews with teachers, reports from the school counselor and media specialist, a description taken from stages associated with the team development rubric, and my own observations.

In addition, information from the team development rubric was used to

corroborate the data. The portrayals given by the members of the teams, the counselor, and media specialist provided important information, which was used to determine team stages.

This study indicates that some teams were not strictly within one particular category, but tended to periodically switch from one to another and then back. The Grade 5 team tended to switch from forming to performing. This is so because this team has a high percentage of new members who are still learning the team culture and mode of operation. Often, however, because of the skills and experience of the veteran teachers, the team operates with a high degree of proficiency.

Grade 6 tends to operate between storming and norming. The teachers are very capable and competent, but there is tension on the team. There appears to be philosophical differences among these teachers, and this often makes it difficult for them to team effectively.

The seventh-grade team has reached a stage of performing. These teachers understand each other well and get along. They are proficient and have found a way to effectively collaborate despite the variety of personality types found on the team. They complement each other.

Another performing team is Grade 8. The teachers get along exceptionally well. Humor is a key component to the operation of this team. This group also has the most complex teaming format of all the teams, yet the members manage to find a way to collaborate effectively.

All of teams at Lakeside are organized to use interdisciplinary teaming and do so in several different ways, and to different degrees. Members of the Grade 5, 7, and 8

grade team appear to be satisfied and describe their teams as being strong. This is so despite the various ways of operation.

An important aspect of the collaborative process and team development is the level of satisfaction experienced by members of the teams (Cooper, 1998; Hilgermann, 1998; Padilla, 1997). These studies concluded that job satisfaction tends to be higher in successful teams. Satisfaction was one description which I used to describe team development, and is regarded as a descriptor of the team's improvement.

Recognizing Growing Points

Members of the teams recognized their growing points. A recognition of areas of needed growth is the first step toward making improvements. Teams have expressed concern about these areas, and appear to have a desire to make improvements. Recognizing these needs and planning to improve contributes to the strengthening of these teams. One growing point is subject integration.

Subject Integration

Teachers on the teams expressed concern that they are not yet able to integrate the subject areas in their disciplines as they would like. There are some teams making progress in this area, but concerns remain. Studies done on the importance of subject integration (Clark & Clark, 1997; Lounsbury & Clark, 1990) conclude that the interdisciplinary teaming structure presents an ideal environment for teachers to collaborate on breaking down the boundaries of single-subject curricula.

Team members at Lakeside Middle School have expressed concerns about the need to grow in the area of subject integration. Dori shares: "I still think we need to work

across the curriculum” (Vol. 1d, p. 39). This concern is also shared by Candice: “We need to work on interrelating our disciplines a little bit more” (Vol. 2c, p. 16). Adrian also agrees: “We need some more time learning multi-curricular stuff. We need to really work together looking at how we can integrate curricular cross sections” (Vol. 3a, p. 7).

Communication Among Teams

Three of the four teams at Lakeside Middle School (5, 6, 8) commented on the issue of inter-team communication and relations (see Table 7). On several occasions I have heard members of the Grade 7 team express concern about this area though I have no quotes. The teams, along with the principal, encore teachers, and school counselor, all agree that this was one practice which was weak in the school. One general reason given has to do with the schedule. The lower grades (5 and 6) operate on a different schedule from the upper grades (7 and 8). This circumstance does not even enable these groups to eat lunch at the same time. Therefore, any collaboration between upper and lower grades would entail a significant degree of effort.

Related to the lack of communication among teams is the issue with the encore teachers. For the encore teachers, the schedule was the main reason for a lack of team-to-team collaboration. While the core teachers are meeting to plan and collaborate, the students are in the encore classes.

Several themes emerged from my investigation of the encore teachers. The first is betrayal. Some encore teachers feel betrayed because even though they were a part of the planning of the team approach at Lakeside, they were never effectively integrated into the practice of teaming. There are two contributing reasons for this. The first reason is

TABLE 7

TEAM TO TEAM COMMUNICATION

Grade 5 Team	Grade 6 Team	Grade 8 Team
<p>Not a lot. We're in the process right now of trying to work with other teams more. (Vol. 1a, p. 6)</p> <p>Right now we really don't have any contact with them at all. I have no idea what they do. (Vol. 1a, p. 7)</p> <p>There is very little of that done. We've talked about it, but I think the problem is that time factor. (Vol. 1c, p. 24)</p> <p>That's probably a down point. We hardly ever see them. (Vol. 1d, p. 39)</p>	<p>We have very little intercommunication. We're very weak at that. (Vol. 2d, p. 23)</p>	<p>We don't cooperate a lot. (Vol. 4a, p. 5)</p> <p>I really have no idea what the other teams are doing. There is literally no communication there. (Vol. 4b, p. 20)</p> <p>We don't cooperate a lot. We don't have a lot of opportunity to share with other teams. (Vol. 4d, p. 34)</p>

time. The schedule configured as it is, makes it almost impossible for collaboration between core and encore teachers during the normal school day. The second reason is comfort. Core teachers appear to be comfortable with their arrangement, and concentrate on taking care of business within their own sphere of influence.

The issue of communication across teams may be linked to priority. When teams are involved in their own quest for success, it takes extra effort to reach out of comfort zones across to other teams. Kruse and Seashore (1997) conducted a study on developing

community within schools. They concluded that the demands of teacher empowerment in teams may minimize cross-team discussions and interactions.

Core teams at Lakeside Middle School are aware of two areas of needed growth. They first need to grow in the area of subject integration, and second, in communication across the teams.

Summary

This study was conducted to provide a description of how individuals and teams experience teaming, and to identify features which contribute to strengthening teams. My study was focused on four core teams and one encore team at the Lakeside Middle School.

Data from the study indicated that the teams at Lakeside experience teaming in several ways. Their experiences have parallels in the literature. The parallels include camaraderie (Fullan, 1992; Maeroff, 1993), facilitating students, and exchange (Mills et al., 1992). Additionally the principal, even with his limited participation, played several roles in their experience. This also has parallels in the literature (Martin, 1994; Williamson, 1996). The principal served as supporter, enabler, and a link. Team leadership was also an important part of the team's experience of collaboration. In team leadership there were no formal roles, seniority was important, and the teams operated a co-leadership model. This operation of a co-leadership model at Lakeside Middle School appears to be unique, and serves as an addition to the literature.

Several features contributed to the strengthening of teams at the school. The first

feature is recognizing the value of new team members (Zahoric, 1987), student centered relationships, adequate time, and a sense of school ownership.

Development for the teams also came through satisfaction in the teaming process (Cooper, 1998; Hilgermann, 1998). Satisfaction was determined by descriptions from the team development rubric about the teachers' perceptions, and determining their stage of development in Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) model.

Lakeside teams' recognition of growing points and a desire to improve them also contribute to their development. The two areas of concern were subject integration (Clark & Clark, 1990) and communication between teams (Kruse & Seashore, 1997).

Recommendations

As a result of my findings, there are several recommendations which will enhance teaming at Lakeside Middle School. These recommendations are based on my observations, interviews, and search of the literature.

The first is that greater effort be made to increase communication, rapport, and planning among teams including the encore team. The problem of finding a common time could possibly be accomplished by periodically employing substitute teachers to care for classes while teachers meet. Using substitute teachers can give team members who are on a different schedule time to meet with their colleagues on other core teams and on the encore team. In these meetings teachers have opportunities to share ideas and plans, and to integrate subject areas in the school.

Second, the teams would also benefit if there was some kind of evaluation of the team operation. Evaluation is an important part of improving the teaming process.

During my study, I did not observe evaluation taking place within the teams. Erb and Doda (1989) state: "It is terribly important that teams set aside times on occasion to evaluate their internal processes, including team meetings. Just the act of evaluation creates a climate of professional integrity vital to team success"(p. 61). On the team development rubric, the lowest portrayal was in the area of process (70). This area, which includes evaluation, indicates that the teams would benefit from attention being paid to this area.

Third, an interaction analysis would be helpful in analyzing the dynamics of interactions among team members during team meetings. This would help to determine who plays what roles on the teams during meetings, and give more insights into team dynamics.

Fourth, greater participation by the principal is needed. Although the principal's support is an important component of teaming at Lakeside, his limited participation has affected the process. Greater involvement by the principal is needed for teams at this school to improve teaming within grades and between grades.

Finally, there has been no indication that the teams have received any training since the inception of teaming in the district. Joyce and Showers (1988) have reported that ongoing training through study groups and other forms of collaboration produce remarkable gains for teachers and ultimately the students. The teams at Lakeside could benefit from learning techniques on how to be more effective in their operation and development. Maeroff (1993) shares data from a Minnesota Department of Education poll:

A poll of those who participated in academies for team building in Minnesota found

that 32% felt that students got better instruction as a result of the experiences of their teachers. 20% felt that the students benefitted from the positive climate produced by the team's academy attendance. On the other hand, 18% felt that the program had little or no impact on instruction, and 14% were unsure of the effect on students. (p. 156)

Gibson (1992) also concluded through research that teachers valued training, support, and activities which foster team development. These studies indicate the potential which training has to benefit teams and eventually the students and schools.

At Lakeside, training would likely be more effective if the team development rubric is used to determine the areas which the teams describe as being weakest, and then work on strengthening these areas. The skills needed to team are not natural for most people, and therefore have to be learned. Through training, team members can improve teaming skills, learn communication, planning, evaluation, and other skills needed to collaborate more effectively.

Future Research

The results and conclusions of this study have generated several recommendations for future research.

1. Is there a connection between a team's perception of successful collaboration and actual measures of successful collaboration?
2. How do administrators affect the functioning of teams?
3. In what ways do the encore teams affect school culture?
4. How can team functions be evaluated to facilitate learning development?
5. Do some personality types influence team development more than others?

Summary and Conclusion

This perceptual study investigated the dynamics of collaboration and teaming experiences of four core teams and one encore team at Lakeside Middle School. In this study I focused on the perceptions of the teams in terms of their relations with each other, and described how they experience teaming. I also identify features which contribute to strengthening the teams.

Teaming is an important part of the school culture, and has been so from the school's beginning. During my study of the dynamics on the core teams, I realized that an important issue was being overlooked: the feelings and perceptions of the encore teachers.

I have also seen that despite the variety of ways in which teams operate and collaborate, there is no fixed pattern or formula which determines how they develop. Teams are quite capable of development even when they collaborate and operate in a variety of ways within the same building. What is most important is that they find a way that works for them, and use it effectively.

Much of what I have reported in my study of teaming at Lakeside is widely documented and supported by the literature. In this regard, my study confirms and supports the body of literature. The key areas in which my study adds to the literature is the issue of encore teachers not participating on teams because of scheduling issues and, consequently, having feelings of betrayal. Additional key areas are the need for team evaluation and training and the important role of the principal in the process.

The school principal has the potential to improve the process of teaming at the

school by greater participation in the teams. By providing training for the teachers, teaming skills can be developed and improved.

For Lakeside Middle School, the areas which have the most impact on teaming are adequate time, autonomy, and camaraderie. Issues such as communication between teams and subject integration are growing points. An awareness of these issues plays an important part in team development. At Lakeside Middle School, teams have found ways to operate effectively despite variations in their approaches.

APPENDIX A
LETTERS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher Consent Form

Andrews University
 School of Education
 Curriculum and Instruction

Dion Harrigan

I am a Ph.D. student in Curriculum and Instruction at Andrews University. As part of a research effort in the School of Education at Andrews University, a study is being conducted on the dynamics of collaboration among members in teaching teams at your school. This study involves observation, interviews, and artifacts. There are no known risks associated with these procedures.

While there may be no direct benefit to you at this time for participating in this project, we are hopeful that we will learn something that will assist teachers in understanding more clearly the dynamics of the collaboration process.

All information collected will be held in strictest confidence. While this information may be published, at no time will your name be used. In addition, you are free to terminate this consent at any time and withdraw from this project without prejudice. If you have any questions concerning this project or this consent, please feel free to call me, Dion Harrigan at 471-6758 or my committee chair, Dr. Shirley Freed at 471-6163.

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the project described above. I have read and understood this statement and have had all of my questions answered.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness _____

School Principal Consent Form

Andrews University
School of Education
Curriculum and Instruction

Dion Harrigan

As part of a research effort in the School of Education at Andrews University, a study is being conducted on the factors that promote and inhibit collaboration among members in teaching teams at your school. This study involves observation, interviews, and artifacts. There are no known risks associated with these procedures.

As you realize, _____ has been an integral part of one teaching team. Through interviews, observations, and artifacts I would like to collect data on the dynamics of the collaboration process in his/her team.

The data will be collected primarily from _____ however, your views and that of other professionals at the school may be needed and appreciated. All information collected will be held in strictest confidence and at no time will your name be used in publications. You understand that your participation in this research is voluntary and if you have any questions concerning this project or this consent, please feel free to call Dion Harrigan at (616) 471-6758 or Dr. Shirley Freed at (616) 471-6163.

While there may be no direct benefit to you at this time for participating in this project, we are hopeful that we will learn something that will assist teachers in understanding more clearly the dynamics of the collaboration process and therefore be more effective in the process.

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the project described above. I have read and understood this statement and have had all of my questions answered.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Interview Questions

1. What aspect of teaming gives you the most satisfaction?
2. What to you is the greatest challenge of teaming at this school?
3. How do you define teaming?
4. What is the principal's role in the collaboration process?
5. What are your group's strengths and weaknesses?
6. What new approaches or strategies does your group plan to implement for the coming year?
7. How has teaming had an impact on the school curriculum?
8. If you were to grade your group's performance on teaming, what letter grade would you give?
9. What question do you wish I would have asked that I didn't?

Interview Schedule

Date	Name	Team
January 19	Annie	Grade 5
January 20	Brent	Grade 5
January 26	Claire	Grade 5
January 26	Ava	Grade 8
January 27	Dori	Grade 5
January 29	Emily	Grade 5
January 29	Bill	Grade 8
January 30	Carmen	Grade 8
February 22	Deidra	Grade 8
February 22	David	Grade 6
February 23	Angela	Grade 6
February 23	Gordon	Counselor
February 24	Brian	Grade 6
February 24	Candice	Grade 6
February 24	Beverly	Encore / P.E.
February 24	Aaron	Encore / P.E.
February 24	Carl	Encore / Ind. Arts
February 24	Fran	Media Specialist
March 3	Debra	Grade 7
March 4	Adrian	Grade 7
March 4	Barbara	Grade 7
April 7	Doris	Encore / Art
April 9	Celeste	Grade 7
April 9	Earl	Encore / Band
April 14	Henry	Principal

**Lakeside Middle School Schedule
1997-98**

5th GRADE

7:50-9:20	Core
9:20-10:50	Encore (Art, Gym Shop)
10:50-11 :20	Lunch/Recess
11:20-12:00	Band
12:00-12:40	Core
12:40-2:20	Core
2:25-2:50	Advisory

6th GRADE

7:50-9:15	Core
9:15-10:00	Band
10:00-10:50	Social Studies
10:50-11:20	Recess/Lunch
11:20-12:45	Core
12:50-2:20	Encore (Art, Gym)
2:25-2:50	Advisory

7th GRADE

7:50-9:20	Gym, Health (1 st Sem.) Art, Shop (2 nd Sem.)
9:30-10:20	Core
10:30-11:20	Band
11:20-11:50	Lunch/Recess
11:50-1:20	Core
1:20-2:20	Core
2:25-2:50	Advisory

8th GRADE

7:50-9:20	Art, Shop, (1 st Sem.) Gym, Health (2 nd Sem.)
9:20-10:30	Core
10:30-11:20	Band
11:20-11:50	Lunch/Recess
11:50-1:20	Core
1:20-2:20	Core
2:25-2:50	Advisory

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE AND TABLES

TABLE 8

Team Development**5 Models Compared**

Developer	Stage1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Tuckman	Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing
McGrath	Goal Choice	Means Choice	Policy Choice	Goal Attainment
Gersick	Sudden Formation	Maintenance	Maintenance	Sudden Revision
Peck	Pseudo-Community	Chaos	Emptiness	Community
NTL	Infancy	Adolescence	Adulthood	Adulthood

TABLE 9

Descriptors of Team Development**Forming**

- Getting to know the tasks and the team members.
- Learning each other's skills and expectations.
- Beginning to define tasks and roles.
- Testing each other's commitment and attitude.
- Focusing on symptoms and problems not related to the task.

Storming

- Setting unrealistic goals.
- Resisting working together.
- Not making much progress.
- competing for control.
- Focusing on tasks or goals and not how to get them done.

Norming

- Having some difficulty, but making progress toward reaching the goal.
- Using each other's ideas.
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback.
- Setting and usually following team ground rules and norms.
- Valuing individual differences.

Performing

- Making progress toward the goal with speed and efficiency.
- Working together to diagnose and overcome obstacles
- Using feedback to make changes.
- Finding a way to continuously improve how they work together.

Adapted from Development Dimensions International.

TABLE 10

Team Development Rubric

Name: _____

Please circle the number on the continuum that most closely matches your opinion.

My team has:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

No direction or goals	Unclear direction or goals	Well-stated Direction or goals
--------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------------

My team:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

Has no clear procedures	Uses procedures inconsistently	Uses clear procedures consistently
----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

My team's members:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

Do not express openly	Sometimes express openly	Always express openly
--------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------

My team's members:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

Do not contribute	Must be encouraged to contribute	Willingly contribute skills and ideas
----------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

My team's members:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

Don't fulfill their Duties	Sometimes fulfill their duties	Always fulfill their Duties
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------

My team's members:

1 ***** 2 ***** 3 ***** 4 ***** 5

Try to do it all by themselves	Sometimes rely on each other	Confidently rely on each other
-----------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Adapted from Development Dimensions International, Inc.

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF TEAM-SUCCESS AREAS

Grade 5 Team					
Teacher	Description	Classification	Team Average	Counselor's Portrayal	Media Specialist's Portrayal
Annie	28	strong	27.8	25.5	23
Brent	28	strong	27.8	25.5	23
Claire	27	strong	27.8	25.5	23
Dori	29	strong	27.8	25.5	23
Emily	27	strong	27.8	25.5	23
Grade 6 Team					
Teacher	Description	Classification	Team Average	Counselor's score	Media Specialist score
Brian	23	On track, but needs development in some areas	24.5	15.5	21
David	26	strong	24.5	15.5	21
Candice	26	strong	24.5	15.5	21
Angela	22	On track, but needs development in some areas	24.5	15.5	21

TABLE 11-- CONTINUED.

Grade 7 Team					
Teacher	Description	Classification	Team average	Counselor's score	Media Specialist's score
Adrian	29	strong	26.5	27	25
Barbara	28	strong	26.5	27	25
Celeste	21	strong	26.5	27	25
Debra	28	strong	26.5	27	25
Grade 8 Team					
Teacher	Description	Classification	Team average	Counselor's score	Media Specialist's score
Ava	28	strong	28	26.5	25
Bill	28	strong	28	26.5	25
Carmen	28	strong	28	26.5	25
Debra	28	strong	28	26.5	25

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TABLE 12
Team Rubric Scores

<i>Grade 5</i>	Purpose	Process	Communication	Involvement	Commitment	Trust	Teacher Total
Annie	5	5	4	5	4	5	28
Brent	5	4	4	5	5	5	28
Claire	5	4	4	5	4	5	27
Emily	5	5	4	4	4	5	27
Dori	5	4	5	5	5	5	29
Team Total	25	22	21	24	22	25	139
<i>Grade 6</i>							
Angela	4	3	3	3	4	5	22
Brian	4	3	3	5	4	3	22
Candice	4	4	4	4	5	5	26
David	4	4	4	4	5	5	26
Team Total	16	14	14	16	18	18	96
<i>Grade 7</i>							
Adrian	4	5	5	5	5	5	28
Barbara	4	5	5	5	4	5	28
Celeste	3	3	4	4	4	3	21
Debra	5	5	3	5	5	5	28
Team Total	16	18	17	19	18	18	106
<i>Grade 8</i>							
Ava	4	4	5	5	5	5	28
Bill	4	4	5	5	5	5	28
Carmen	4	4	5	5	5	5	28
Deidre	4	4	5	5	5	5	28
Team Total	16	16	20	20	20	20	112
School Total	73	70	72	79	78	81	453

TABLE 13

OUTSIDE DESCRIPTORS

Descriptors for School Counselor							
	Purpose	Process	Communication	Involvement	Commitment	Trust	TOTAL
Grade 5	5	5	3.5	4	5	3	25.5
Grade 6	2	3	2	3	2.5	3	15.5
Grade 7	3.5	5	4	5	4.5	5	27
Grade 8	3.5	4	5	5	4	5	26.5
TOTAL	14	17	14.5	17	16	16	94.5
Descriptors for Media Specialist							
	Purpose	Process	Communication	Involvement	Commitment	Trust	TOTAL
Grade 5	5	4	3	3	4	4	23
Grade 6	4	5	4	2	3	3	21
Grade 7	4	4	4	5	4	4	25
Grade 8	3	3	5	4	5	5	25
TOTAL	16	16	16	14	16	16	94

TABLE 14

OVERVIEW OF TEAMS

Grade 5 Team		
Teacher	Years in District	Education
Annie	3	BA
Brent	4	BA + 15
Claire	24	MA + 45
Dori	12	MA + 30
Emily	1	BA
Grade 6 Team		
Teacher	Years in District	Education
Angela	22	MA + 45
Brian	24	BA + 15
Candice	12	MA + 30
David	24	MA
Grade 7 Team		
Teacher	Years in District	Education
Adrian	29	MA
Barbara	15	BA + 15
Celeste	25	MA + 45
Debra	1	BA

TABLE 14-- CONTINUED.

Grade 8 Team		
Teacher	Years in District	Education
Ava	20	MA
Bill	16	MA + 30
Carmen	24	MA
Deidre	1	BA
Encore Team		
Teacher / Class	Years in District	Education
Aaron / PE	30	MA + 45
Beverly / PE	23	MA + 45
Carl / Ind. Arts	21	MA
Doris	18	MA + 15
Earl / Band	2	MA
Fran / Med. Sp.	13	MS + 45
Gordon / Couns.	21	MA + 15

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